Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Strengthening decent rural employment opportunities for youth across different processes in the forestry value chain in Uganda

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Strengthening decent rural employment opportunities for youth across different processes in the forestry value chain in Uganda

PRACTICES AND LESSONS

Rebecca Ssanyu and John-Bosco Mubiru, Development Research and Training, Uganda

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Cover photo: A workstation in Mwenge plantation in Kyenjojo district. ©FAO/Qiang Ma

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Acronyms

ALREP	Agricultural Livelihoods Recovery Project
BTVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training
CODECA	Community Development and Conservation Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRE	Decent Rural Employment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMP	Forest Management Plans
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FSSD	Forest Sector Support Department
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICA	Integrated Country Approach
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
KALIP	Karamoja Livelihood Programme
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MWE	Ministry of Water and Environment
NAPYE	National Action Plan on Youth Employment
NFA	National Forestry Authority
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPGS	Sawlog Production Grant Scheme
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTGA	Uganda Timber Growers Association
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
YEF	Youth Entrepreneurship Facility
YLF	Youth Livelihood Fund
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme

Executive summary

This report addresses the subject of decent rural employment for youth in the forestry sector. It is based on case studies carried out across different processes in the value chain within the sector in Uganda, ranging from seedbed development through to plantation management, saw logging and trading.

This qualitative study was based on four primary objectives, namely:

1. To ascertain the status and policy environment of employment, particularly youth employment, in the rural forestry sector in Uganda, including the promotion of employment opportunities and decent work.

2. To provide insights and policy suggestions using case studies on selected forestry initiatives aimed at promoting youth employment opportunities.

3. To identify decent work indicators for promoting employment opportunities and improving working conditions in rural forestry.

4. To initiate a dialogue between youth and relevant stakeholders on promoting decent employment opportunities in the forestry sector and to contribute to the development of the national strategy for youth in agriculture.

Findings indicate that a considerable number of Uganda's legal and policy frameworks emphasize the participation of youth in the labour market, especially given that young people constitute a large majority of the country's population. However, only a few of these frameworks focus on decent work, whether for young people or the country's workers more generally.

The case studies revealed that efforts to provide decent employment were mixed. Larger and more formally oriented forestry enterprises were more likely to focus on decent work provisions for their labourers. Smaller enterprises, while aware of most of their decent work obligations, were unable to implement them due to resource constraints.

The case studies also revealed numerous opportunities for youth to participate in the forestry sector. These included tapping into existing government and NGO programmes ranging from tree planting to plantation management. Additional employment opportunities were provided by businesses in the sector and the management of woodlots for poles and fuel.

The limiting factors for youth participation in the sector largely arise from the huge investment cost incurred by such participation, particularly access to and utilization

of land and financial resources. Other limitations included a lack of relevant training and skills and poor working conditions. These conditions are compounded by few numbers and limited capacity of officers within the Labour Directorate to administer and enforce labour regulations.

The report proposes decent work indicators and recommends both policy and implementation strategies to increase youth participation and decent work practices in the sector. Key among these are: the provision of social protection to forestry sector workers; improving the enforcement of labour and industrial regulations by collaborating across sectors and involving non-state actors in labour inspections; increased awareness of other aspects of industrial relations; strengthening sectoral occupational health and safety; promoting agroforestry; and incentivizing youth participation in the sector.

1. Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Promoting decent work has been a noted strategy for reducing poverty since the implementation of FAO's five Strategic Objectives. This study relates to Organizational Outcome 2 ("Decent Work") under FAO Strategic Objective 3 ("Reduce Rural Poverty"). The focus of this study – Strengthening decent rural employment opportunities for young women and men – contributes directly to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all). The study also contributes to the stated aims of Uganda's National Employment Policy (2011), including promoting agriculture and rural employment, particularly the employment of vulnerable groups, including women and youth.

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the current status and policy environment governing employment in the rural forestry sector in Uganda, particularly youth employment. This includes the promotion of employment opportunities and availability of decent work.

2. Provide insights and policy suggestions using case studies on selected forestry initiatives aimed at promoting youth employment opportunities.

3. Identify decent work indicators for promoting employment opportunities and improving working conditions in rural forestry.

4. Initiate a dialogue between young people and relevant stakeholders on promoting decent employment opportunities, with a focusing on participation in the forestry sector; and contribute to the development of the national strategy for youth in agriculture.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The authors adopted a qualitative research methodology using the descriptive case study approach. The aim was to undertake a comprehensive, contextual analysis of the extent to which the decent work agenda was applied across different processes in forestry value chain in the involving youth and identify issues to be addressed or further examined through future research.

Scope of work

The cases were selected to maximize learning based on three contexts: government-led programmes, civil society-led programmes and private sector-led programmes. The case studies were limited to the following subject matter: (1) forestry sector participation; (2) youth involvement; and (3) tenets of decent rural employment. These features influenced the question guide.

Literature review

As a first step, we conducted a literature review on the current legal and policy environment governing employment – particularly youth employment – in rural forestry in Uganda. The review also addressed the definitions of "youth," "youth employment" and "decent work" applied by the literature. It also identified the primary challenges, needs and opportunities for youth in the forestry sector.

The Cases studied

The authors studied nine forestry initiatives with the aim of analyzing their efforts to promote decent youth employment. These ranged from small- to large-scale enterprises, including government initiatives, private sector enterprises, civil society-supported projects and community group ventures. Using the case studies, we sought to examine different processes in the forestry value chain, from seedling development to timber production and trade.

Information on the cases studied was obtained using various methods:

- Website reviews: where applicable, we reviewed available website information including the organization's mission, vision, project objectives, target groups and achievements to-date, among other factors.
- Government documents: this included legislation, policies, guidelines and research reports. The aim was to understand the government's policy and/or legislative position regarding workers' rights and employment conditions; progress and achievements in furtherance of the decent work agenda; and the application of this agenda in the forest sector.
- Interviews: interviews were conducted using a semi-structured question guide. This included 18 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) comprising three female and 15 male respondents from civil society organizations, the private sector, district and village farmers' associations, government and private forests and government ministries and departments. In addition, 13 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 187 respondents (comprising 30 female youth, 139 male youth, 4 female adults and 14 male adults) participating in various processes in the value chain in the forestry sector. A detailed list of key informants and FGDs is appended. Questions focused on the initiative's objectives, institutional features, funding sources and activities/approaches, participation of young boys and girls and enabling environment, among others. We also sought to understand the results and impacts, needs of youth, and main lessons learned.

1.3 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

The primary challenge for this study was the limited awareness of the concept of decent work and, relatedly, the application of the decent work agenda in Uganda. As a result, many intended interviewees – especially those on the policy side – rescheduled, cancelled or referred us elsewhere, indicating they are not currently working on this topic.

Similarly, some of the organisations/individuals undertaking initiatives in the sector declined to be documented, citing fear of "political exposure". Others, having wound up their projects, were not able to convene beneficiaries to participate. As a result, additional time was required to identify new respondents who would suit the study.

2. Understanding youth employment in Uganda

The term "youth" has different meanings depending on context. The African Youth Charter defines youth as people aged between 15 and 35 years.[1] The United Nations, while recognizing its member states' respective definitions, defines youth as persons aged between 15 and 24 years (UN DESA, n.d.). Sociologically, youth may be viewed as a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, from dependence to independence and from being recipients of society's services to contributors to economic, political, and cultural life (Wilson and Letšosa, 2010). The Ugandan Constitution defines youth as persons aged between 18 and 30 years. Based on this definition, the 2014 census reported that youth constituted 23 percent of the country's population (approximately 7.8 million people), while more than 78 percent were aged below 30 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics) (UBOS, 2016).

2.1 YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT IN UGANDA

Uganda's working-age population[2] continues to grow, increasing from 14.6 million in 2005/06 to 16.5 million in 2012/13 (UNHS, 2012/13) and 18.1 million people in 2014 (Census, 2014). Youth participation in Uganda's labour force grew from 4.2 million in 2005/06 to 5.5 million in 2009/10, and was expected to reach 9.5 million by 2015.[3] As observed by the World Bank (2015), this indicates that at least 500 000 young people are entering the labour market each year to compete for approximately 9 000 available jobs. In 2012/13, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics stated that unemployed youth represented 64 percent of the total number of unemployed persons in the country. The African Development Bank (AfDB) puts the share of unemployed youth among the total unemployed in Uganda as high as 83% in Uganda (Soucat et al., 2013). About 30 percent of institutionally qualified youth in Uganda are unable to find jobs and the situation is even worse for semi-skilled and unskilled youth (Magelah & Ntambirweki-Karugonjo, 2014).

Causes of youth unemployment vary, including inadequate investment and supply, a mismatch between skills required and skills possessed, weak employability, lack of access to resources such as land and capital, and a high rate of labour force growth (4.7 percent p.a.) (UBOS, 2010). Another cause of the high rate of unemployment is low demand for workers. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development

[1] African Union Commission, 2006

[2] The working-age population is a measure of the total number of potential workers within an economy. The working age in Uganda ranges from 14 to 64 years.

[3] Current figures have not yet been released.

(MFPED) contends that the primary challenge in Uganda's labour market is insufficient labour demand resulting from unsustainable and almost stagnant employment growth (MFPED, 2014).

Critics have also said that young people have a negative attitude towards blue-collar jobs, which has contributed to their inability to find employment (Ulandssekretariatet, 2014). Underemployment indicators, such as those identified by the ILO relating to time, wages and skills,4 show that labour potential is heavily underutilized. Young people work in jobs that do not fully utilize their skills and competencies, earn low pay and do not work full-time as desired. This scenario was well illustrated by the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2012/13. Figure 1 refers to the entire labour force; percentages may vary when focusing specifically on youth.

The National Development Plan II states that youth constitute about 4.4 million of the

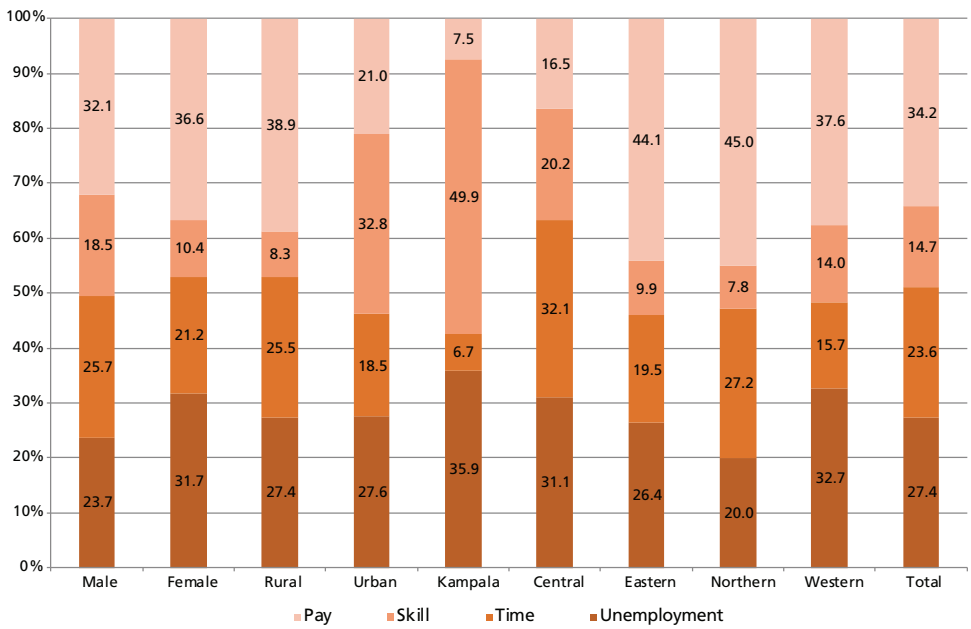

Figure 1: Components of labour under-utilization (%) 2012/13

Source: Uganda National Household Survey 2012/13 p. 60.

total labour force, 3.5 million of whom live and work in rural areas, while 80 percent of the total labour force was engaged in non-wage employment (according to 2011 figures).[5]

[4] The ILO has identified several indicators of underemployment, including: 1) time-related underemployment, whereby employees work fewer hours than previously agreed upon or than they were willing and available to work; 2) income-related underemployment, whereby employees earn a lower income than would otherwise be the case due to specific characteristics of the employer or workplace, such as a lack of equipment, poor training or a disorganized working arrangement; and 3) skills-related underemployment, whereby employees' skill sets exceed those required for the job.

[5] See Uganda's *Second National Development Plan (NDPII) 2015/16 - 2019/20*, (2015).

According to UNDP, Uganda's youth population is comprised of both educated/skilled and unskilled individuals living in both rural and urban areas. In regions such as Karamoja and Northern Uganda, youth have been affected by the conflict that has plagued the region for the last 23 years. These experiences, arising from a breakdown of social and economic infrastructure, have had a strong bearing on the ability of young people to access the social and economic capital required to acquire skills and create opportunities (UNDP, 2014).

Reporting on youth working conditions in Uganda, the ILO observed that 17.2 percent of adolescents aged 15–17 were out of school and working. Moreover, 69.8 percent of youth remained in vulnerable employment as self-employed (43.1 percent) or unpaid family workers (27.7 percent). At the same time, 78.4 percent of those in paid employment did not have a written contract. More than 9 out of 10 young workers were engaged in informal employment, while one-third worked less than 20 hours during the reference week (ILO, 2015).

Under Section 32 of Uganda's Employment Act (2006), children aged over 12 years are permitted to engage in economic activities under adult supervision (older than 18) provided doing so does not affect their health or education, is otherwise hazardous, or requires them to work between the hours of 19.00 and 07.00. The Act does not, however, define the term "hazardous." In its preamble, Uganda's 2006 child labour policy defines hazardous work as that which, by its nature or the circumstances under which it is performed, jeopardizes the health, safety and morals of a child. It does not provide further explanation regarding what these hazards might be. The Occupational Health and Safety Act (2006) provides more legislative detail regarding hazardous work. Section 13 places a duty on employers to protect workers from any hazards and Part XII enumerates various hazardous substances, including how they are to be labelled, handled and declared. Although it does not specify what hazards are likely to affect what sector, it mentions forests as a work environment bound by the legislation.

Although it is the smallest contributor to gross domestic product (GDP), the agriculture sector continues to absorb the largest portion of Uganda's young workers (57.2 percent), followed by the service sector (32.1 percent) and industry (10.9 percent). Forestry and fishing are also important sources of youth employment in the country (see Table 1). Still, Ugandan youths tend to prefer employment in the non-agricultural sector, which is one of the biggest employers in rural areas. They often migrate to urban centres, preferring to work in service sector jobs such as riding motorcycle taxis (*boda-bodas*), or as low-wage industrial labourers (Magelah and Ntambirweki-Karugonjo, 2014).

A report on labour market transitions in Uganda established that paid employment in the agricultural sector is more insecure than elsewhere. This is attributed to the fact that most agricultural workers (95.5 percent) do not have a written contract, compared to 85.0 percent of workers in the industrial sector and 65.3 percent in the service sector; moreover, many jobs in the agricultural sector did not last for more than 12 months (Magelah and Ntambirweki-Karugonjo, 2014).

Table 1: Distribution of youth employment 2013 and 2015 (%)

Distribution of youth employment by sector, aggregate, and sex, 2013 and 2015 (%)						
Sector	**Total**		**Male**		**Female**	
	2013	**2015**	**2013**	**2015**	**2013**	**2015**
Agriculture	**60.0**	**57.2**	**56.5**	**53.3**	**63.4**	**60.9**
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	60.0	57.2	56.5	53.3	63.4	60.9
Industry	**8.5**	**10.9**	**12.8**	**15.8**	**4.4**	**6.2**
Mining	0.5	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.2	1.2
Manufacturing	5.4	5.6	6.9	6.8	4.0	4.5
Electricity, gas, steam	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.2
Water supply	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0
Construction	2.5	3.8	5.0	7.5	0.1	0.3
Services	**31.4**	**32.1**	**30.5**	**30.7**	**32.2**	**33.0**
Wholesale and retail trade	16.6	14.4	13.8	12.7	19.3	16.0
Transport	3.1	4.7	6.1	9.2	0.1	0.4
Accommodation	1.7	1.5	0.8	0.9	2.6	2.0
Information and communications	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.2
Financial activities	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3
Real estate	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Professional scientific activities	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.2
Administrative and support activities	0.6	0.2	0.8	0.2	0.3	0.2
Public administration	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.1
Education	3.4	3.4	2.7	2.4	4.0	4.3
Health and social work	0.6	1.0	0.6	0.9	0.6	1.0
Arts and entertainment	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.2
Other services	2.4	2.9	2.6	2.0	2.1	3.8
Private households	1.3	2.6	1.0	0.7	1.5	4.3
Activities of extraterritorial organizations	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0

Source: ILO School to Work Transition Survey (2015)

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF "DECENT RURAL EMPLOYMENT"

According to FAO (2012), "Decent Rural Employment" (DRE) refers to any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed by women and men, adults and youth in rural areas that:

i) Respects core labour standards as defined in ILO Conventions and therefore: (a) is not child labour; (b) is not forced labour; (c) guarantees freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining and promotes organization of rural workers;

and (d) does not entail discrimination at work based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin or other;

ii) Provides an adequate living income;
iii) Entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability;
iv) Adopts minimum Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures, which are adapted to address sector-specific risks and hazards;
v) Avoids excessive working hours and allows sufficient time for rest; and
vi) Promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training.

FAO and ILO indicate that the rural poor face various forms of decent work deficits, gaps and exclusions. Most (particularly women and young people) are represented in the low-productivity employment segment of the – often informal – rural economy, both in subsistence farming and agricultural wage labour and in non-farm self-employment. Rural labour markets are distinguished by high levels of informality, a preponderance of casual employment relationships, high rates of self-employment, labour force fragmentation, information asymmetries and the uncertainties related to the specific characteristic of agricultural production. Most rural jobs do not ensure decent income levels and sustainable livelihoods. Working conditions are generally poor, labour legislation is rarely enforced and social dialogue is weak (FAO, 2008). SOLIDAR[6] adds that social dialogue is often limited or non-existent and the demands of workers and their representatives are frequently ignored or rejected by employers or the authorities. Even where a collective bargaining agreement has been concluded, it is often not honoured (SOLIDAR, 2011).

The ILO asserts that achieving decent work within the post-2015 framework should be "a dynamic process of successive improvements in wages, working conditions, labour institutions and standards of employment and social protection that are related to the structural transformation of an economy". It is a process that expands inclusive growth, stronger job creation for men and women and poverty eradication (ILO, 2014). Interventions should contribute towards meeting SDG targets 8.5 to "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value" and 8.6 to "reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training". To achieve this, it will be necessary to address the whole range of decent work deficits encountered by people in rural areas.

[6] SOLIDAR is a European network of 47 NGOs and labour movement organisations working towards all people living in dignity.

3. Legal and policy framework for youth employment and decent work

3.1 NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Uganda has several laws and policies that specifically promote employment opportunities for young people and recognize the challenges posed by youth demographics. The Uganda National Youth Policy (2001) points towards establishing realistic programmes and services that respond to youth needs and with which they can meaningfully engage. It also emphasizes employment creation through youth-led enterprise development and the protection of youth from labour exploitation (MGLSD, 2001). In a 2016 version of the National Youth Policy, youth are recognized as all persons aged between 15 and 30. The revised policy promotes unlocking youth potential for sustainable wealth creation and development. It provides a framework for harnessing their full potential for improved productivity and equitable socio-economic and political development.

The draft National Action Plan for Youth Employment and the Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan 2012-2022 aims to promote employment generation, increase youth employability and balance youth labour supply and demand. The National Youth Council promotes youth participation in political and development processes. One of the priority areas of the Second National Development Plan (NDP II) is human capital development, which focuses on education, life skills and technical training.

More broadly, several sectoral policies allude to youth employment and aspects of the decent work agenda. The National Employment Policy (MGLSD, 2011) defines decent work as:

> Opportunities for safe work that is productive and delivers a meaningful income, security in the workplace, and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom of expression and association, to organize and participate in decision-making, and equality of opportunities and treatment for all men and women.

Table 2 summarizes the legal and policy instruments that provide for youth employment and/or decent work elements.

From Table 2 we can deduce that policy and legal frameworks have not sufficiently addressed the needs of the majority of Uganda's youth – particularly those in rural areas – or the numerous human capital development needs of young people. In any case, they have not been reviewed to determine the extent to which they have affected youth unemployment and underemployment. There are, however, progressive policies, such as

Table 2: Legal and policy instruments for employment and decent work in Uganda

Policy	Provision relating to (youth) employment	Provision relating to decent work conditions
Legal Instruments		
The Uganda Constitution 1995	• Article 40 provides for economic rights; every Ugandan to practice his or her profession and to carry on any lawful occupation, trade or business	The core strategies are • Creating employment • Improving human resources • Ensuring gender equality • Raising per capita income levels • Aligning the labour force to sectoral priorities
Employment Act No. 6 of 2006	• Entitles youth to access employment opportunities in the same manner as other citizens • Proposes to support young people, particularly women	• Provides definition of decent work • Promotes equality of opportunity with a view to eliminating any discrimination in employment.
Workers Compensation Act Cap. 225		Entitles employees to automatic compensation for any personal injury from an accident arising out of and during their employment
The Occupational Safety and Health Act No. 9 of 2006	• Applies to all workers and employers but excludes men and officers of the armed forces	• Applies health and safety measures to every workplace or working environment • Necessitates that the employer provide compensation for any injuries sustained, diseases contracted or death suffered during and because of employment • Provides for general health and welfare provisions • Mandates all employers to protect workers from any hazard
Policies and Strategic Frameworks		
National Development Plan (2015/16-2019/20)	• Theme is strengthening Uganda's Competitiveness for Sustainable Wealth Creation, Employment and Inclusive Growth	Not specific
National youth policy 2001[7]	• Promotes equal access to socio-economic and employment opportunities for youth • Provides for youth representation in politics	Silent on decent work

[7] A new 2016 National Youth Policy has been announced but is not yet available to the public at time of writing.

Cont.

Policy	Provision relating to (youth) employment	Provision relating to decent work conditions
National Youth Policy 2016[8]	• Prioritizes productivity and employability of youth for sustainable livelihoods • Emphasizes both wage and self-employment • Seeks to promote systematic and sustainable development of skills among youth • Recognizes agricultural extension services and finance as one of the resources that youth should obtain from government	Silent on decent work, but recognizes skills development as a precursor to effective labour market participation
National Employment Policy 2011	• Promotes agriculture and rural employment • Encourages investment in enterprises that can employ large numbers of wage workers • Encourages provision of rural finance for income generating projects • Emphasizes employment of vulnerable groups including women and youth • Proposes to support young people, particularly women, to transit from informal to formal employment	Defines and typically focuses on decent work
National Agriculture Policy 2013	• Suggests strategies for promoting and improving agricultural labour and farm employment	Mandates the ministry responsible for labour to ensure that fundamental principles and rights for agricultural workers and labour standards are understood and adhered to by employers
National Action Plan on Youth Employment	• Outlines the strategies and actions needed to engage youth in gainful employment, equipping them with entrepreneurial skills, and increase their participation in local governance and decision-making Specific focus areas are: 1. Strengthening policy and legislative frameworks for youth employment; 2. Improving effectiveness of education and skills development; 3. Increasing youth enterprise development and sustainability; and 4. Improving equity in youth employment opportunities. Focus Area 3 includes opportunities for influencing forestry enterprises	Focus Area 4 indirectly alludes to promotion of decent work within the youth employment and enterprises Strategic objectives 4.2 and 4.3 mention protection of youth with special needs – such as girls and the disabled – from discrimination and abuse, including in the workforce, and emphasizes increasing their employment opportunities Strategic objective 4.1 aims to enhance the productivity and profitability of rural and urban-based youth agricultural enterprises. Within this context, agroforestry may be promoted

[8] Information based on a popular version of the revised National Youth Policy of September 2016, retrieved 30 December 2017 from http://upfya.or.ug/wp-content/files/National_Youth_Policy_Popular_Version.pdf

Cont.

Policy	Provision relating to (youth) employment	Provision relating to decent work conditions
National Social Protection Policy 2015	• Target groups include workers in both the formal and informal sectors (noting the majority of youth work in the informal sector)[9] with specific mention of the agricultural informal sector • Mentions youth among vulnerable populations • Vulnerable youth mentioned as a group that will be the target of non-contributory transfers • Recognizes the critical need for complementary social protections to address risks and shocks in agriculture (and other sectors)	Does not mention any relationship between social protection and decent work, but alludes to informal sector workers as a target group for social protection Priority areas include diversifying social security services and developing appropriate social security products for the informal sector Proposes to introduce affordable health insurance schemes
The Uganda National REDD+ Programme: REDD+ National Strategy[10]	• Observes that the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS) promotes a demand-driven, farmer-led agricultural service system that targets youth among others • Involvement of youth is mentioned under cross-cutting issues as an emerging critical issue within gender integration in REDD+	Mentions decent work as one of the non-carbon benefits that will accrue from implementing the REDD+ programme Emphasizes the importance of creating awareness of the REDD+ programme

Compiled by author

the revised National Youth Policy (2016) and National Social Protection Policy (2015), which are not necessarily focused on decent work but include priorities that would go a long way towards contributing to the decent work agenda in the forestry sector.

Based on some of the above policies, and in recognition of the youth unemployment challenge, the government has designed and implemented several programmes to integrate youth into national development. These include, but are not limited to, the Youth Livelihood Programme, the Youth Entrepreneurship Venture Capital Fund, the Youth Opportunities Programme, the Industrial Processing Venture Capital Fund, the Programme for Children and Youth and Skilling Uganda. Other special programmes in northern and northeast Uganda, such as the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), Agricultural Livelihoods Recovery Programme (ALREP) and the Karamoja Livelihoods Programme (KALIP), include components for youth engagement. The Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) programme (MFPED, 2014) provides opportunities for skills development.

[9] Italics are author's emphasis.

[10] Information based on the October 2017 draft retrieved on 30 December 2015 from http://www.mwe.go.ug/library/uganda-national-redd-strategy

The REDD+ programme, while not specifically addressing work with or involving youth, proposes strategic options that create a wide range of opportunities for young people to participate in the forestry sector. These include increasing and intensifying agroforestry practices, commercial smallholder and community bio-energy woodlots, pole and timber plantations and large-scale timber plantations for poles and sawlogs. The programme also promotes improved charcoal kilns linked to plantation sites and designated areas of natural forest regeneration. With access to the necessary information on REDD+, youth could easily tap into these lucrative options.

3.2 INTERNATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

At the international level, Uganda has been a member of the ILO since 1963 and ratified 31 Conventions, 30 of which are in force. Convention C005 on the minimum age for industry was automatically denounced in May 2004 by the minimum age convention C138. The ratified conventions include those on forced labour, equal remuneration, discrimination (employment and occupation), minimum age (14 years), minimum wage, worst forms of child labour, employment injury benefits and social security (minimum standards), among others (ILO, 2017). However, the standards and legal/policy provisions for decent work have not been fully implemented. This is attributed to several factors, key among which is the lack of expertise and experience of Uganda's labour administrators.

ILO's Decent Work Programme in Uganda

The ILO has implemented decent work programmes in Uganda since 2006. It has provided technical assistance to the government, trade unions, employers' federations and civil society through initiatives such as the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility (YEF) and tripartite collaborations on policy dialogue and training. The ILO's work seeks to align national goals with international cooperation, and therefore requires active participation by relevant social partners. As part of the current Decent Work Country Programme 2013-2017, ILO is supporting Uganda to promote improved labour administration and adherence to fundamental human rights. This includes promoting decent wages and strengthening compliance with labour standards and the industrial court. The country programme also aims to promote youth employment by enhancing employment creation, capacity and skills development, and systems development. It also recognizes the vulnerabilities of workers in the informal sector and seeks to expand social security coverage, on an incremental basis, to the informal economy where workers are not covered by regulatory frameworks. It also seeks to address workplace discrimination related to HIV (ILO, 2012).

4. Participation of youth across different processes in the forestry value chain in Uganda

4.1 EVIDENCE FROM LITERATURE

Table 1 shows that most youth are employed in the agriculture and forestry sectors. According to the Uganda Forestry Policy (2001), the forestry sector is an important employer, especially in the country's rural areas, employing about one million people in the formal and informal sectors (100 000 and 900 000 people respectively). Firewood and charcoal production for domestic, commercial and industrial use dominates employment in the forest sector. The Uganda Forestry Policy (2001) estimates about 100 000 jobs are generated from forest plantations alone. Between 2004 and 2007, 10 000 permanent and 15 000 part-time jobs were generated by planting 21 000 hectares of plantation forest (Kaggwa, Hogan and Hall, 2009), generating UGX 20 billion (USD 12.1 million). For communities living around forest reserves, the forestry sector was responsible for between 11 and 27 percent of household cash incomes (Bush and Nampindo, 2004). The lack of disaggregated data, including gender and age categories, makes it difficult to estimate how many youth are employed in the forestry sector.

There is, however, some evidence demonstrating the extent of youth employment in the sector. The use of tree planting as a government strategy to gainfully engage youth dates back to the colonial days, when the government's Forest Department (FD) launched several tree planting campaigns. Indeed, the National Forestry Plan asserts that male youth actively participate in wood trade and charcoal burning, while women specialize in non-wood forest produce. Additionally, female youth dominate the retail trade and use of charcoal in homes in urban areas. Youth in the forestry sector are predominantly involved in charcoal burning, followed by firewood cutting, as these activities provide quick economic returns. Youth also engage in the timber business, mostly as porters (Mukasa *et al*., 2012).

Despite this involvement, the National Forestry Authority (NFA) (2005) observes that the majority of people, especially youth, have a limited interest in the sector, continually minimizing and overlooking forestry and related enterprises. This can be attributed to several factors. In rural areas – where the majority of forest resources are found – most youths are landless and must find employment either by engaging in illegal forest activities or by migrating to urban areas. Even in instances of community forestry involving collaborative forest management, the issue of resource ownership

remains a grey area. Furthermore, male youths are not interested in participating in the management of forest reserves, as this is likely to limit their illegal activities in the forestry sector (Gombya-Ssembajjwe and Banana, 2000).

A study to assess the attitudes of out-of-school youth and their level of participation in tree planting activities established that sex, age, education, occupation, distance to the nearest trading centre and land ownership significantly contributed to attitudinal differences. Factors such as lack of capital, land and tree tenure security, long payback periods from planted trees and bad beliefs, taboos and superstitions about certain trees hindered participation (Agea *et al.*, 2009).

Both government and non-state actors are currently promoting youth participation in the forestry sector. The National Youth Policy (2001), for example, promotes conservation of natural resources including soil, forest, biomass, water, wildlife and wetlands. It calls upon young people to conserve and sustainably use natural resources. The policy encourages activities such as afforestation, reforestation and proper waste management, as well as promoting youth education and awareness on the dangers of environmental degradation.

The National Environmental Management Policy (1994) promotes the effective involvement of youth in natural resource policy formulation, planning, decision-making, management and programme implementation. The Forestry Policy supports its implementation by promoting community participation in forest management and developing management partnerships and legal agreements between government and local groups. This includes ensuring women, youth and the poor benefit from the development of the forestry sector. These groups are specifically recognized because, while they are frequently dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods, they are often marginalized during the development process.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS (CASE STUDIES)

This section details the information obtained from the case studies, focusing on venture type and decent work elements observed or omitted, as well as the opportunities similar ventures provide for enhanced youth participation in Uganda's forestry sector. Case studies include government projects, initiatives supported by civil society organizations and private sector enterprises.

4.2.1. FAO and decent rural employment in Uganda

In May 2015, FAO launched the Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural youth employment in three countries – Guatemala, Senegal and Uganda. The programme aims to generate lasting policy change to foster youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture. The ICA provides capacity and technical support to enhance the employment content and youth focus of policies and programmes for rural development. In Uganda, ICA collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) to develop the National Strategy for Youth in Agriculture, and contributed to the development of a National Action Plan on Youth

Employment (NAPYE) (FAO, 2016). The ICA also supports knowledge generation related to the specific challenges and job prospects for adolescents and school dropouts (aged 14–17) in rural areas, and complements the MAAIF and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) by incorporating youth-related considerations into its statistic tools (FAO, 2016).

4.2.2. The Sawlog Production Grant Scheme

Nature of initiative

The Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) is a Government of Uganda programme funded by the European Union and implemented by FAO Uganda. The programme's general objective is to increase rural incomes through commercial tree planting by the private sector and local communities, while at the same time helping to mitigate climate change effects through intensive afforestation (European Commission, 2014). The programme, currently in its third phase of implementation (SPGS III), promotes private group and individual afforestation initiatives by supporting the establishment of commercial plantations and ensuring downstream processing and optimum utilization of plantation timber (i.e. using the entire tree by diversifying products and minimizing waste) established under the first and second phases of the SPGS. A key informant at the SPGS office noted the programme has several components, including providing subsidies (catalytic amounts of financial resources) to selected commercial foresters. Beneficiaries are identified through a strict bidding process using FAO systems and procedures. There are several criteria for selecting beneficiaries, the most prominent of which is the requirement that prospective beneficiaries must have already invested in commercial forestry. This means they must have acquired land and planted trees. Such farmers can then apply to the grant scheme to recover a percentage of their investment costs. The agreed grant amount is confirmed through a contract between the individual and the SPGS.

Participation of youth

The SPGS programme does not have a specific youth focus. It is open to all investors in forestry on equal terms, targeting any individual capable of meeting the established criteria. As such, it is not possible for the SPGS coordination office to know how many youth (male or female) are involved in the various projects it supports. The key informant at the SPGS office observed:

> "We do not exclude youth per se. But the projects require heavy investment, which many youth do not have. They would have to own or lease land, finances to access inputs, pay workers to establish plantations, etc. For those who apply and meet the criteria, we work with them".

Decent work focus

The programme ensures that the farmers and trainees with whom they work have protection and first aid kits and adhere to health and safety practices. The project has a training component in which beneficiaries and their workers are educated about decent work, especially health and safety in agroforestry. The key informant noted that SPGS staff obtained training in Occupational Safety and Health from a South African training institute and conduct similar training for their workers and beneficiaries. This approach, which emphasizes knowledge and information sharing, is one component of a wide range of forestry training.

Key successes of the project

- The turn-up for grants by communities and institutions, as well as requests for ongoing support, is high. This is positive, but speaks to the cost of investing in the sector, for which many hope to receive a subsidy.
- When training opportunities are announced, the turn-up is overwhelming. This suggests technical field knowledge is limited, but also points to a positive attitude and eagerness among foresters and the general public to obtain additional training.
- The project's selection process and interaction with famers has promoted unprecedented standards of transparency, compliance with key criteria and methods of managing commercial forests.

Sustainability strategy

- The project's success hinges on skills transfer through training. Trainees can leverage their newly acquired skills to gain employment and pass on these skills to others. The trainees can support commercial forestry in the future.
- The project promotes business-mindedness by encouraging farmers to recognize the importance of plantation establishment and maintenance.
- By collaborating on the SPGS project, government institutions will build their own capacity, promote future commercial forestry and support farmers in the future. The entire infrastructure developed as part of this project will eventually revert to government.

Challenges

- Climatic conditions affect planting and plantation survival.
- Commercial forest farmers have limited technical capacity in plantation work (one of the components of the programme is to build this capacity). Progress has been made but much more training is required, including for the very many commercial foresters who do not collaborate with SPGS.
- Competing land uses: given pressing food, shelter and survival needs, prospective farmers question the viability of investing in forestry, in which profits can only be realized over the long term. Many who do not have much land opt for shorter-term agriculture and animal farming. This also represents a major challenge for youth who may wish to invest in forestry.

- Pests and diseases: government has been unable to impose sufficient control measures on tree pests and diseases. At the same time, farmers do not know how to detect diseases in trees. Often, by the time they realize a forest is infected, the entire plantation has almost been destroyed.
- Limited funding: the grant scheme does not cover even half the cost of investment. It is only a catalytic subsidy.

Job opportunities for youth in the programme/sector

The SPGS programme encourages youth to become contractors in tree plantations. To help them achieve this, the project trains youth in forest management, beginning with nursery development through to forest management and harvesting. With this training, youth can become nursery operators or plantation workers.

In furtherance of its efforts to stimulate interest for future investment in commercial forestry, the project also engages youth through schools. In collaboration with the National Forestry Authority, for example, it has provided training and guides to good practice in several secondary schools.

Sawmilling in Mwenge plantation

The Mwenge forest plantation in Kyenjojo district is comprised of four forest reserves covering 5 774 hectares. It is a National Forestry Authority (NFA) project comprised of 17 workers aged 25 to 35 years: five forest supervisors (two women and three men), two transport assistants, nine patrolmen and one secretary. Different activities are underway on the plantation at any given time, namely: planting and related sub-activities, nursery management, plantation management and harvesting. For all these activities, plantation managers solicit the services of local communities through a bidding process using the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority procedures.

Nature of the sawmilling initiative

Sawmilling in Mwenge plantation is a private venture undertaken by licensed entrepreneurs. Once the crop is due for harvesting, plantation workers measure and compute height and diameter to obtain the volume of each tree. Then NFA advertises locally and nationally, selecting and licensing bidders to harvest the trees. Bidders buy trees via bank payment, after which a license is granted. The contractors identify and hire their own workers to harvest the trees and are therefore responsible for their workers' actions and workplace conditions. Sawmilling takes place during the tree-harvesting period.

Youth participation

Saw millers are usually young men aged 18–30 years (with a few incidences of participation by boys as young as 12 and men as old as 65) hired by entrepreneurs to harvest trees and make timber. Information obtained from a group discussion in Kagora CFR revealed that permission to employ young boys aged 14–17 is granted by their parents or guardians. Often, these are out-of-school children whose parents/guardians are eager for them to work and learn with trusted business people (under an apprenticeship of sorts) rather

than loiter in villages and potentially become involved in criminal behavior. Because of the need to keep these boys usefully occupied, their parents seek work for them with anyone capable of paying a reasonable amount for their labour, while at the same time keeping them out of harm's way.

Decent work focus

- Contracting for jobs: Work in the sawmilling value chain is typically contracted verbally. Some paperwork is maintained by employers in order to keep track of the potentially enormous number of workers involved. This largely consists of lists detailing a worker's name, origin, telephone and next of kin contacts and a copy of his/her national identity card. This information is kept by the employer in case of emergency or criminal acts by employees. Jobs are usually short-term, determined by the number of trees the employer has been licensed to harvest. Where the job is large, business people may hire many workers at one time or complete the work in quarterly cycles whereby one set of workers is released and another set hired every three months or so.
- Remuneration: Terms of payment are negotiated verbally and often collectively so that workers know they will be paid equally for an equal volume of work by the time they commence their employment. Workers are paid based on the quantity of timber produced at the end of each workday. Typically, each piece of timber fetches between UGX 200 and UGX 500, depending on its size. Payment to the younger boys is negotiated by and paid to their parents/guardians. An initial deposit is paid before they depart for the forest to commence work, while the balance is paid following completion of the agreed tasks. The boys are charged for food and health care costs that may arise while they are on site.
- As a result of incomplete or non-payment for work completed in previous years, older and more experienced workers – having learned to negotiate more effectively – receive their total agreed payment prior to commencing work. In this instance, they produce timber matching the value of the pre-payment they have received. They produce supplementary timber in order to cover food and medical costs provided by their employer, as well as travel costs to and from their villages.
- Health and safety: Attempts are made to provide overalls and workers are encouraged to buy their own gumboots. If they are injured or fall sick, the contractor administers first aid and basic symptomatic treatment (in case of suspected malaria) and takes them to the nearest government health facility for treatment. Workers must bear any treatment costs themselves. Alternatively, these expenses (and meals) are offset against their total wage bill.
- Sleeping conditions: During the pit sawing exercise, workers sleep in makeshift shelters, which they build themselves, for extended periods. An inspection of these shelters revealed they are not suitable for human occupation, especially in the forest where conditions are frequently cold and wet. This, coupled with the heavy workload, increases workers' risk of contracting diseases such as malaria and developing chest and skin conditions.

- Saw-milling vs agriculture: When asked whether they would prefer working in the agricultural sector rather than saw-milling (which has precarious conditions), youth workers noted that agriculture was more profitable and less precarious. Indeed, some had used their income from saw logging to pay for agricultural labour on their own land. However, they noted that the benefits (income) from agriculture were slow to accrue and obtained in tiny, incremental amounts. Hence they preferred to engage in saw-milling, through which they received a large lump sum that could be used to plan and invest in large assets or businesses.

Figure 2: A workstation and shelter in Mwenge plantation

The employer in Kagora Central Forest Reserve defended her failure to provide basic decent work requirements such as health care (including workplace compensation) and protective gear. She noted Uganda has a free health care policy and she ensures workers are taken to a public health centre if they fall ill. She reported that she had previously provided protective gear but workers had stolen most of the items and equipment, which increased the cost of doing business. She now encourages them to source their own gear.

The plantation manager explained that the NFA takes no responsibility for working conditions, but may intervene if problems arise and are reported, in which case they link the workers to police. Instead, it has a supervisory role to ensure harvesting is undertaken correctly, adhering to set terms, conditions and time frames. It also compiles reports on the numbers of trees harvested and those remaining. The plantation workers train in fire prevention and management, and the terms and conditions of tree harvesting. The NFA also patrol plantations to ensure unmarked trees are not harvested.

Job opportunities for youth

Sawmilling enterprises employ many workers at any given time. It is a labour-intensive activity with operating conditions requiring effort and resilience, attributes young people possess. For this reason, business people often seek to employ youth to carry out such work. The catch is that these young people must be known within the business community to possess the requisite skills for sawmilling and related forest work; workers, including younger boys, are often recruited based on the recommendation of previous employers.

4.2.3. The Youth Livelihood Programme

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), a five-year programme that commenced in 2014, is financed by the Government of Uganda. It was designed to respond to the high unemployment and poverty rate among the country's young people. The programme's primary objective is to empower youth to harness their socio-economic potential and increase their self-employment opportunities and income levels. The YLP has three components:

(1) Skills development: this supports development of employable skills. Preferred investment options include agro-processing, among others.

(2) Livelihood support: this provides productive assets for viable, income-generating enterprises chosen by the youth. Recommended options include agroforestry, value-added agriculture and animal husbandry.

(3) Institutional support: this component provides technical skills and capacity development for effective project implementation, as well as transparency and accountability oversight.

Specifically, the programme provides youth with marketable vocational skills and tool kits for self-employment and job creation. It provides financial support to enable youth to establish income-generating activities. It also supports them with entrepreneurial and life skills and helps them to access relevant knowledge and information for a positive mind-set. The YLP is thus an opportunity for youth in rural areas to access the financial resources and knowledge necessary to invest in forestry and agroforestry enterprises promoting DRE principles. Indeed, key MGLSD respondents observed, "some youth that have accessed funds from this programme have invested in agriculture and forestry in their communities, especially tree planting."

One of the greatest limitations of the programme is that it does not offer grants. Participating youth are obliged repay the money provided – either interest-free within the first 12 months or at a 5 percent per annum interest rate if repayment is made after the initial 12 months. Because forestry activities are inherently long-term, few young people decide to risk their resources by investing in commercial forestry. Instead, many invest in the development of nurseries and sale of seedlings, which is not necessarily a sustainable activity.

4.2.4. Programme to promote green jobs and fair labour market in Uganda

The Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) started a five-year programme that promotes green jobs and

a fair labour market in Uganda. The programme, expected to run from financial year 2015/16 to 2020/21, is aimed at fighting unemployment, decent work deficits, and workplace unsustainable environment practices in the country.

According to a key informant in the MGLSD, the programme specifically focuses on youth by creating green jobs for both graduates and non-graduates. This informant stated that jobs are green when they help reduce negative environmental impact and promote safety and health at work, ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies. Some of the tenets of the programme include the reduction of occupational accidents, diseases and industrial pollution in the workplace; promotion of international employment by providing capital to potential migrant workers; increased job placements for young people; and enhanced workplace-monitoring systems. The programme will target both educated and uneducated women and youth and over 200 000 Ugandan workers will have access to decent jobs abroad. In addition, over 1 000 women and youth groups will be supported with equipment and tools, training and exposure in green employment.

As part of the Green Jobs Initiative, MGLSD has partnered with UNDP to implement the "Inclusive Green Growth for Poverty Reduction Project". One of the project's key deliverables is the provision of grants to young individuals and groups commencing or undertaking innovative projects. The grants will target projects that propose to: establish innovation in natural resource management; increase access to agricultural inputs and marketing facilities for improved natural resource utilization; and strengthen implementation of policies and legal/regulatory frameworks linked to natural resource management. Improvement of livelihoods and job creation is a core aim of this project. To achieve these deliverables, MGLSD has set aside UGX 30 million (FY 2017-18) for access by groups or individuals planning or currently undertaking innovative projects. Each applicant is entitled to access up to 10 million Uganda Shillings (MGLSD, 2017). The programme is still in its initial stages and therefore presents opportunities for youth to access these grants for use in forestry enterprises.

4.2.5. Vi Agroforestry: the Farmers' Organizations Agroforestry programme

Vi Agroforestry is a non-government organization that commenced operations in Uganda in 1992. Its primary focus is to provide financial and technical support to small-hold farmers, including women, children and youth. The organization has implemented various programme phases, beginning with a tree planting phase in 1992–1996; an agroforestry phase in 1997–2005; an agroforestry, farmer enterprise and financial services development phase in 2006–2008; a regional, sustainable agricultural programme in 2009–2011; and the farmers' organizations agroforestry programme from 2012 to the present. The organization works through its partners to manage and deliver its programmes.

The current Vi Agroforestry programme focuses on empowering district farmers' associations to support their members – typically small-scale farmers – to view agroforestry as an economic venture. The organization promotes tree planting and management as well as increasing tree coverage. To facilitate enterprise development, farmer groups are trained to mobilize their own savings and lend to each other through Village Saving and

Loan Associations (VSLAs). Within this structure, Vi Agroforestry emphasizes gender equality by focusing on women's economic empowerment and political participation. Half of the development funds are earmarked for women. Among the savings and borrowing groups, there are currently 7 364 women and 5 515 men.

To promote youth participation in the forestry sector, from 2009 to 2010 Vi Agroforestry began working with 16 youth groups in a project known as Children of the World (COW). The project attracted 278 females and 625 males. The organization also implemented the Farmers for the Future project, targeting youth and children. Its purpose was to stimulate early interest in agriculture and related businesses among project beneficiaries.

One of the farmers' organizations through which Vi Agroforestry currently works is the Mpigi District Farmers Association. The association's mandate is to replace and/or rehabilitate degraded trees; train farmers to adopt agroforestry; provide interested community members with tree seedlings; promote forest-friendly initiatives such as tourism, bee-keeping, fishing and vegetable growing; and lobby the local government to adopt user-friendly policies in the forestry sector. The association has an agreement with the NFA to allocate land to farmers, while the association distributes tree seedlings to them.

Within the association's membership, youth participation is skewed towards males; it is estimated that only two of every 100 youth engaged in forestry activities are women. Women tend to gather firewood, grow vegetables and harvest herbs, while young men engage in lumbering, planting trees, logging for brick burning, firewood and charcoal burning, as well as mining sand. They are sometimes self-employed workers, but mostly employed by others. The association is comprised of and works with community-based farmers' groups. Focus group discussions with two of the association's membership groups are summarized in the text box below.

We did not obtain enough information to deduce whether the specific question of decent work was a key focus of the district farmers' association. Indeed, key informants did not appear to be familiar with the concept of decent work. When probed further, they noted that:

> The association has not addressed itself to the decent work agenda. However, we believe that there is decent work because as an association we have not received any reports of forced involvement or child labour. Subscription to the group membership is not discriminative against any vulnerable people, and community members control their working hours. Youth earn adequate income although it is hand-to-mouth.

The informants added that farmers' groups also have constitutions with guidelines pertaining to factors such as gender equality, employment age, non-discrimination and so on. The association also observes the guidelines contained in the gender and employment policies, which include non-discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDs.

4.2.6. Community Development and Conservation Agency (CODECA)

CODECA is an NGO established more than ten years ago by communities around forest reserves. It aims to support communities to improve their livelihoods through tree

Box 1: Summary of FGDs with two member groups Mpigi District Farmers' Association

Nkinga Twekimbe Environmental Group

Nature of initiative

A community-based group operating in Ndawadigi Forest in Butambala district. The group obtained 43 hectares of land from the NFA. Thus far, it has used 25 hectares to plant trees.

Membership

125 members from 6 villages, of whom 80 are youth (60 male and 20 female).

Youth participation (Forest Activities by youth)

- Rehabilitation of degraded forest plantations
- Crop farming
- Livestock and fish keeping, wild hunting
- Harvesting craft materials and herbs
- Brick laying and sand mining
- Firewood collection
- Previously participated in lumbering

Opportunities for youth

- Training, access to tree seedlings from Vi Agroforestry and the Association of Uganda Professional Women in Agriculture and Environment
- Access to local government CDD[12] grants – for example have thus far received UGX 1.6 million for seedling purchase and forest rehabilitation

Challenges (needs of youth)

- Lack of proper tools for undertaking agroforestry
- Lack of markets and price fluctuations for their products
- Competition with wild animals and birds
- Land disputes among the youth
- Agreement between NFA and the group to utilize forest resources was verbal. There is no written/ formal documentation

"Lack of land to plant their own trees for personal income. Although we were given land by NFA, we have not utilized some of it because some of us believe that the trees will belong to the government. So we hesitate to grow long term trees on this land"

Mbazzi Farmers' Association (MFA)

Nature of initiative

A community-based group operating in Lwamuda Central Forest Reserve. Through Collaborative Forest Management, the group obtained a 30-year lease (2015–2045) of 19 hectares from the NFA.

Membership

42 members of whom 28 are youth (16 male and 12 female). Membership also includes persons with a disability and older persons.

"Although our group does not discriminate against anyone, young women are often prevented from participating in group activities by their husbands"

Youth participation (Forest Activities by the youth)

- Forest rehabilitation – planting new trees
- Clearing forest for private growers
- Bee-keeping
- Fish farming
- Collection of herbs and firewood
- Female youth: harvesting craft materials for baskets and markets

Opportunities for youth

- Training and establishment of Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) with support from Vi Agroforestry
- Access to seedlings, training and promotion of WASH[13] from Tree Talk Plus and Skills Oriented Development Initiative (SODI)
- General capacity building in forestry management by NFA

"The main goal of all stakeholders supporting us is to promote income generating activities that will stop us from encroaching on the forest cover"

Challenges (needs of youth)

- Limited capital to invest in forestry activities
- Negative effects of climate change
- Competition with wild animals
- No payments with regard to rehabilitation of the forest. The motivation to degrade it further is therefore high

[12] CDD stands for Community Driven Development. It is a competitive local government grant given to community-based initiatives that directly contribute to the achievement of local government objectives.

[13] WASH stands for Water Sanitation and Hygiene.

planting and environmental conservation activities. The organization works in Budongo Sub-County in Masindi District, adjacent to three forests: Budongo Central Forest Reserve, Rwensame Central Forest Reserve and Motkai Community Forest. It promotes sustainable forest management through community-led initiatives and works directly with youth, advising them on tree planting, supporting farmers with tree seedlings and sensitizing them to the dangers of deforestation. It collaborates with other organizations, such as the Budongo Conservation and Field Station, to implement a buffer zone to eliminate illegal forest activities, promotes alternative forestry activities that conserve trees and sponsors a small number of youth to attend vocational and technical training (at the time of the study five youth had received sponsorship). It also works with Village Enterprise in partnership with USAID to encourage people to participate in savings and lending associations and provides start-up business capital to provide alternatives to illegal forestry as a source of income. The Jane Goodall Institute supported CODECA with over 800 seedlings, which were distributed to 20 of the community's youth.

CODECA faces constant challenges posed by illegal access to and use of forest resources, mostly by youth. These self-employed workers engage in land clearing for cultivation, illegal wood felling and wood sawing into timber, charcoal burning, firewood and brickmaking. They also gather fruits, vegetables and craft materials and hunt and fish. Some youth spend their time as lookouts for NFA rangers to ensure they do not impound the timber or arrest their colleagues.

CODECA also works with some private forest owners to promote sustainable forestry practices. Keith Bitamazire owns one such forest, summarized in Box 2 (below). The organization uses this forest as an example of how young people can invest in forestry to their economic benefit. The owners of the forest work closely with the District Forest Officer for approval of timber for sale, provision of information and links to other organizations supporting forestry. Other support in the form of cash, training, capacity building in forest management, registration and licensing has been provided by various organizations, including the Jane Goodall Institute, Care Uganda, World Wide Fund, Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) and the NFA.

Due to ongoing and frequent illegal forestry activities, violation of decent work conditions and exploitation of youth by businessmen is rampant. For example, workers are employed on a casual basis and only paid when the timber has been safely loaded onto trucks located a considerable distance from the forest. Remuneration for loading a large truck can be as low as UGX 30 000. There are also incidents in which children aged 13 to 16 years are involved in heavy duty felling and carrying timber over a very long period. When asked about investing in sustainable and legal forestry ventures as opposed to stealing and encroachment, one youth said:

> "The opportunities in the forests cannot satisfy our needs. The few opportunities that are available need a lot of capital. For example, we wanted to construct a fishpond but it required us to raise over UGX 15 million. We can only be involved in short-term opportunities such as production of timber and charcoal burning. If we do not get support to find innovative alternative income generating activities, it will

Box 2: Excerpt of interview with Keith Bitamazire, a private forest owner working with CODECA

Nature of the initiative
This is a private commercial forest on 85 acres of land in Masindi district. It has existed for 34 years.

Youth participation
Youth are employed on a short-term basis to undertake lumbering/tree lopping using chainsaws, transferring timber from the forest and loading it onto trucks, protecting the forest from encroachment and planting and rehabilitating trees under strict supervision. Female participation is very low and limited to collecting water and firewood.

Opportunities for youth
The most obvious opportunity for youth in such a private venture is the availability of jobs – i.e. employment by forest owners to undertake work of various kinds within the forestry value chain. There are few, if any, training opportunities but workers can learn on the job.

Decent work
Verbal/ oral contracts apply. Payment terms are clear, viewed as fair and more reliable, though rates are still relatively low.

Other practices that attempt to promote decent work, albeit with some limitations, include the following:
Youth are encouraged to wear protective gear but must buy it themselves.
Child labour is discouraged, but sometimes occurs.
Relatively acceptable working hours, except in special circumstances, e.g. loading one truck of timber can take over 12 hours.
In case of injury or accident in the forest, the owner of the power chainsaw must compensate the worker. However, the forest owner provides first aid to the injured and takes them to the nearest health centre.

Challenges of involving the youth
- Their labour is not reliable – they may not turn up when expected and do not keep time.
- Untrustworthiness – they sometimes steal timber (take timber without owners' consent).
- Increased cost of supervision and inspection to curb timber theft by workers.

be difficult to stop illegal access and decimation of forests. Instead of impounding our charcoal, the government needs to involve us in decision-making regarding the forestry sector and build our capacity in the sector".

This case shows that opportunities for jobs in rural agroforestry are individual, informal and led by the private sector. They depend significantly on access to land, start-up capital and resources such as seedlings, but are also strengthened by training and capacity development in agroforestry management. These opportunities must go hand-in-hand.

Indeed, the youth acknowledge these opportunities and the future benefits that accrue from participation in the forestry sector. They also appear to desire greater legal, sustainable opportunities in the sector but do not currently have the means to acquire them. In the absence of access to land and other resources, interventions attempting to build their technical capacity to engage in forestry have proved futile. For youth to overcome this limitation it will be important to act collectively to access land and other resources such as CDD from the NFA and local government.

4.2.7. Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA)

The Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) is a membership organization bringing together owners of private plantations working together to promote the industry. Collectively, members share experiences, bargain for fair markets and deal with government. They promote the role of commercial forestry in the economy while conserving the environment. The association provides technical support to its members throughout the timber value chain. This support includes mobilizing its membership base, land preparation, importing and/or generating and supplying seeds and seedlings and organizing workers to support planting and plantation management. The UTGA also provides regular quality assurance supervision, supports farmers to hire technical staff during harvesting periods and deliver to the markets, and recommends members to prospective buyers. It also supports value addition (such as the production of additional tree by-products) to enhance members' incomes. As part of UTGA's corporate social responsibility, it collaborates with civil society and non-government organizations to plant, restock and/or rehabilitate trees in selected communities. Through this process, it also conducts community awareness sessions about the importance of preserving trees and engaging in commercial forestry.

Youth participation

Youth can be employed in planning, processing, trade, research on forestry development and the provision of transport for traders. Some businesses approach UTGA members in their local communities who are looking for jobs, while others buy seedlings from members. The UTGA deliberately seeks to attract interns from institutions providing training in forestry. It also carries out job-hunting for technical/specialized duties. When the association needs to expand its membership base, it conducts a recruitment drive specifically targeting youth through community awareness meetings and local FM radio campaigns. It educates them about the immediate and future benefits of investing in

commercial forestry, including future job and income security. The lack of land ownership by youth poses a particular challenge. The UTGA encourages these individuals to lease land or seek assistance from their families. The NFA also supports those in executive jobs and can access loan facilities to acquire land for investment in forestry. UTGA encourages educated youth to invest in forestry as an alternative to job seeking. Poor youth who cannot buy or otherwise obtain land often work for their wealthier colleagues. According to a key informant at the UTGA headquarters, it is not possible to confirm the specific number of youth who have been trained or employed as a result of these initiatives. This is mostly because, as a membership organization, it encourages, but may not necessarily document, information relating to youth participation.

Decent work

The UTGA ensures its members and workers adhere to and receive minimum living standards. Its members are required to provide food to their workers while on duty, pay for a specified range of medical care and, if their workers fall sick, pay the costs of medical treatment up-front. They do not pay for workers' medical insurance because it is very expensive and unavailable in many rural areas. The association encourages its members to enforce the use of safety gear as a basic minimum requirement. While it is mandatory for members to provide protective gear to workers, they do not always comply with these requirements. The UTGA has registered a 90 percent compliance rate with this requirement (about 10 percent of members may not yet have resources to provide gear to workers, while others require training on its importance). Moreover, as large numbers of young people have lived in unsafe environments for long periods of time, they have difficulty understanding the importance of certain safety measures. The association also encourages its workers to join a union, although this remains difficult to enforce. To enhance members' adherence to occupational safety and health, technical officers are called on to address these issues during cluster meetings. Members are then encouraged to train their workers using the same principles.

The UTGA was not necessarily aware of the decent work agenda in Uganda or its requirements for the forestry sector. As a member of the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), however, it is bound by its principles and standards. These are enforced among members and workers without compromise. According to key informants, members were not conversant with national decent work standards but assumed the FSC principles were aligned to them. The FSC standards (FSC, 2015) require member organizations to manage forests in an environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable manner.

To promote both compliance with FSC principles and forestry as a viable economic venture among youth, UTGA attracts interns from forestry training institutions, such as Nyabyeya Forestry Training College, to work side by side with youth from communities where plantations are located. This seeks to pass on skills, provide young people with an opportunity to observe compliance with safety regulations and practices and anticipates that interns will subsequently act as role models for youth in their own communities.

Box 3: Forest Stewardship Standard Principle 2

FSC Principle 2: Workers Rights and Employment Conditions
This principle requires members to maintain the social and economic wellbeing of workers. It is cognizant of the ILO declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) based on ILO labour conventions. This principle also promotes gender equality in all dealings by its member organizations, occupational safety and health standards, fair wages and compensation, job specific training and supervision and participatory grievance management with workers.

Other strategies include ongoing training, sensitization and supervision. The association also holds talks by visiting lecturers and/or seminars in higher learning institutions, as well as radio programmes to attract young graduates and members of the corporate world to forestry. However, some members we interviewed expressed frustration about the costs of training incurred as a result of high labour turnover:

> "There are no permanent workers on the forest. They are casual labourers. [The] majority work for less than six months and leave the job. This is a loss to the business as the new ones have to undergo several trainings on how work is done in the forest (Private forest grower, Kamengo)".

While the study did not determine UTGA's compliance as measured by FSC audits, we observed that attempts were made to comply with FSC principles compared to other cases we studied, as illustrated in Box 4.

From the cases outlined in Box 4, we can deduce that OSH elements in the New Forest Company workplace are quite strong. We also observed information and warnings about accidents and injuries and advice to both workers and visitors to wear protective gear while on company premises. There is a fire assembly point including emergency telephone numbers, first aid kits and signposts in the compound instructing workers about safety. Domestic and chemical waste pits are also present, and information on a laboratory noticeboard provides steps to take in case of an accident or contact with chemicals. All staff, including drivers, wore protective gear.

Despite this level of adherence, some challenges remain. The protective gear, for example, is not always 100 percent protective. Workers lack chemical-resistant overalls and chemicals are sometimes inhaled or make contact with skin. Despite a company mandate to conduct regular medical check-ups to determine levels of chemical absorption and exposure, this has not been done. There have also been cases of exposure to high noise levels and some workers have complained of its effects on their ears.

A comparison of these two enterprises reveals both make attempts to provide decent work conditions for their employees. Nevertheless, the extent to which decent work elements are adhered to depends greatly on the capital investment (and therefore size) of the business and other regulatory affiliations. Bigger, more formal forestry enterprises affiliated with other national and international bodies are more inclined to accord their workers better standards. On the other hand, individual enterprises with high levels of

Box 4: Private sector forest initiatives – UTGA members

New Forest Company – Pole treatment plant

Nature of the initiative

The New Forest Company is a private sector initiative dealing in forestry and timber products. The company's pole treatment plant in Uganda is in Mityana town.

Youth participation

- Employs 28 workers aged 20 to 35 years, both permanent and casual
- Jobs include administration, management, treatment of poles, loading, mechanics, etc.

Aspects of decent work

- Working hours: 08.00 to 17.00, with a one-hour lunch break and 20-minute break for tea
- Company provides free tea to employees, but they pay for their own lunch at UGX 2000
- Wages: as high as UGX 600 000 per month for permanent staff, with additional wages for work on weekends and public holidays
- Contractor paid UGX 12 000 per casual labourer per day, passing on UGX 8 500 to each worker and keeping the remainder
- Health insurance with IAA (permanent workers). Medical treatment paid by contractor when needed for casual workers
- Participation of women: largely limited to clerical jobs. Women are not well represented in labour-intensive roles
- Grievance management: workers free to report to supervisor or CEO without fear of losing job
- Occupational health and safety considered very important. Considerable effort is made to enforce OSH standards, with some shortcomings

Private Forest Grower – Kamengo sub-county

Nature of the initiative

This is an individually owned, private commercial forest situated in 9 acres of land. It is located in Kamengo sub-county, Mpigi District.

Youth participation

- Employs 13 youth aged 15 to 20.
- Many younger children employed during holidays as additional labour
- Jobs include planting, slashing, weeding, digging, spraying, patrolling and protection from trespassers

Aspects of decent work

- Workers provided with meals (both lunch and dinner) and shelter (housing) fitted with solar power, an individual mosquito net and water supplies
- Work supplies and equipment: machetes, slashers and hoes
- Protective gear: Gumboots (UGX 15 000 deducted from salary)
- First aid for accidents and injuries
- Working hours: 07.00 to 13.00 and 15.00 to 17.00 Monday to Saturday
- Wages: UGX 80 000 per month
- Health insurance with UPA deducted from their salaries
- No mechanism for grievance management

informality struggle, with some success, to provide their employees with a decent work environment. In both these cases, the balance lies in providing quality work conditions while at the same time breaking even financially.

Opportunities for youth in surrounding communities

A discussion with a group of youth outside the pole treatment plant in Mityana revealed that over 100 youth (aged 15 to 35 years) benefit directly from the plant's existence, albeit informally. At least 70 percent of these have engaged in informal forestry work for five or more years in various value chain processes. Many purchase poles from private owners in different parts of the county for sale to the plant. This business seems fairly lucrative; a single pole collects an average of UGX 45 000 (before costs), although the price per pole will depend on its diameter. Others engage in several other activities, summarized below:

The main challenge in this informal space is the lack of recurrent financial resources to keep businesses running. This is especially relevant in the case of the New Forest Company, which pays workers on a monthly basis. Many do not have cash between payments to pay for poles and other services in the value chain. To overcome this, some youth partner with businessmen who provide them with credit and wait to be reimbursed after they receive their monthly salary.

Other challenges relate to the failure to observe decent work practices. Youth working in the informal sector endure heavy workloads, long working hours, high costs, unfair terms of business and high incidences of work-based accidents without compensation

Table 3: Activities by youth around the pole treatment plant in Mityana

Activities by youth	Amount charged	Other observations
Own and hire out power chainsaws	UGX 2 000 per pole	
Debarking of trees/poles	UGX 1 000 per pole	
Agent searching for plantations with mature poles	UGX 5 000 per pole	There is a pact of sorts to leave this non-intensive assignment to younger youth aged 15–17 years
Loading poles	UGX 10 000 per pole	15 youth can load 50 poles in less than 2 hours
Tractor owners transporting poles from plantations to trucks	UGX 10 000 per pole	
Truck owners transporting poles from various plantations to the treatment plant	UGX 2.5 million from Mubende to Mityana (approx. 81 km) for 50 poles	Price depends on distance
Own plantations with intention of supplying the treatment plant in future		Most plantations owned by youth are small-scale. They indicated a lack of land and financial resources prevented them from growing larger plantations

or treatment. They do not own protective gear (although their employers encourage them to procure it for themselves), have not received any training in forestry-related work and suffer from a general lack of social protection.

4.2.8. Tree Talk Plus

Tree Talk Plus is a non-government organization established in April 2014 with a mission to improve livelihoods by promoting ecologically sound land use and natural resource management through green enterprises. The organization works to achieve its mission by collaborating with central and local government, the private sector, academia and civil society to provide public information and education, research, advocacy and demonstration farms for livelihood improvement. The organization promotes ecosystem restoration with a view to build a climate-resilient Uganda, and its priorities are anchored in the environment and natural resources policy framework.

Tree Talk Plus promotes community conservation by working mostly with schools and community groups, and at times with individuals. Within schools, it facilitates the formation of environment clubs, which mobilize neighborhood communities to adopt agroforestry and soil conservation technologies. Several group and individual initiatives supported by Tree Talk Plus are summarized in Box 5. The organization provides selected community members with basic training in planting and managing nurseries and forest management and helps them to find markets for tree seedlings. However, only group leaders attend training, while other members learn on the job, raising certain challenges.

Box 5: Initiatives linked to Tree Talk Plus in Kaliro District

Mikwaano Environment Uganda	Izinga Youth Farmers Group	Private Forest – Nabo-Line Foresters
Objective The main goal of this CBO is environmental conservation and commercial forestry among youth	**Objective** The goal of the group was to reduce deforestation – "cut one tree plant three trees"	**Objective** Established in 2014 on 30 acres of land. Leased central forest reserve land from NFA and pay sannual rent of UGX 250 000/=.
Membership 60 youth aged 18–30 years who are literate and semi-literate. Female membership is 30%	**Membership** 40 youth: 30 men and 10 women aged 18–30 years	**Membership** Family owned, purely commercial forest
Youth participation (activities) Plant and manage own tree nurseries for own planting and selling. Each seedling sold for UGX 300 to 500 depending on specie Hired to establish and/or maintain other people's forests and government reserves within and outside Kaliro District, where they plant trees, do weeding and thinning	**Youth participation (activities)** Collection of natural tree seeds, bedding and sale of seedlings. Each tree seedling costs UGX 300 to 500 depending on demand Sensitize/spread awareness among other youth about environmental conservation. Collect and sell firewood, herbs, building materials and burn charcoal Youth employed externally to work on private plantations	Youth participation (activities) The manager/owner is 27 years old Initially employed ten youth: two women and eight men involved in planting, slashing, creating channels, etc. Now employs five (all male) youth: two permanent and three seasonal. They guard against encroachers and forest fires Female youth left because the work was labour-intensive

Decent work elements • Youth earn UGX 40 000 per month per person • Work from 06.00 to 17.00, 7 days a week • Reside around the nursery bed and must patrol overnight • Procure their own protective gear • Only managers receive technical training in forestry management. The rest learn on the job	**Decent work elements** • The group charges UGX 300 000 per hectare of work on private forest • Lack of training in forest management	**Decent work elements** • Workers paid UGX 5 000 per man-hour (according to NFA, one man-hour is equivalent to six hours of work) • Provided with lunch and soft drinks worth UGX 1 500 • Permanent workers are paid UGX 150 000 per month and an additional UGX 5 000 per day for extra jobs outside their contract • Workers have no written contracts • Employer provides workers with protective gear • No child labour. Youngest worker is 22 years • Compensation for work-related injuries
Challenges • Expensive protective gear • Expensive inputs such as drought resistant tree seeds • Lack of food during work hours • No linkages to relevant stakeholders	**Challenges** • Difficulty accessing seeds • Drought affects seedlings • Difficult to access market • Expensive inputs • Long tree gestation period • Lack land ownership • No extension services provided from the district forest office	**Challenges** • Forests are also affected by global warming/climate change, especially drought • It takes time to train workers in a range of skills such as spraying, thinning, demarcations, etc. • "It is nearly 2 years now and the workers have not yet gained the required skills" • Most workers complained about low pay compared to the workload. However, NFA recommends between UGX 4 000 to 4 500 per man-hour

4.3 THE PRACTICE OF DECENT EMPLOYMENT IN UGANDA'S FORESTRY SECTOR

Forestry plays an important role in the national economy, but is especially vital to rural economies, creating employment and generating income. It is estimated that forestry generates close to 850 000 jobs across Uganda, comprising 100 000 in the formal sector and 747 000 in the informal sector (Moyini, n.d). As demonstrated by the case studies, there is considerable participation by youth in the forestry sector in both private and government forests as either self-employed workers or employees. Youth participation in forestry is important as it helps to reduce Uganda's youth unemployment rate and is a source of diversification in rural agriculture.

As with any workplace, regulations governing employment in general and decent work in particular also apply to the forestry sector. Using the case studies, this section analyses the practice of decent rural employment, based on the six elements defined by FAO (see Section 2.2). Our findings indicate that forestry sector stakeholders are largely unfamiliar with the concept of decent work. Employers, their workers and self-employed youth are unaware of both the concept and the existence of legislation governing employment and occupational health and safety. Nevertheless, workers have certain expectations, such as protection against hazardous chemicals, fair payment commensurate with workload and basic human rights. Despite these expectations, decent work deficits manifested in all the cases studied, which seems to be the general trend in the sector.

i) ***Employment opportunities***

The findings reveal several opportunities for youth participation in forestry in Uganda. The policy and legal framework, while not always specifically directed towards the forestry sector, contains provisions that can be interpreted in favour of forestry enterprises. These are strengthened by the Green Jobs Initiative under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Its primary focus is creating jobs that contribute to environmental conservation. Programs like the SPGS offer approaches and lessons that could be adopted by small, medium, and large-scale enterprises. Within the private sector and civil society, opportunities exist for youth training and capacity building in forestry management, as well as the provision of seed capital and other inputs to establish their own enterprises. School initiatives, such as the SPGS and Tree Talk Plus programmes, are intended to build skills and stimulate youth interest to engage in agroforestry enterprises in the future.

ii) ***Employment security and stability***

Enterprises and contractual arrangements in the forestry sector are predominantly informal. Young people generally pool resources to jointly establish enterprises as part of a group, with minimal support from local governments, civil society or non-government organizations. Instead, they operate as self-employed, sole traders with a few employees, often contributing family workers to the enterprise – especially in the case of private forests where young sons and daughters provide plantation labour.

Generally, youth employees do not have formal work contracts with their employers, even for work in private forests. Instead, workers are contracted verbally. While

verbal/oral contracts are recognized in Section 25 of the Employment Act (2006) as having equal weight to written contracts, they present challenges for workers in the highly informal forestry sector. High job insecurity ultimately affects dedication to and quality of work, evidenced by high labour turnover and theft of forest products by workers (as reported in the private forest case studies). Youth also felt that the lack of written contracts increased the risk of non-payment or exploitation, as there would be no basis upon which to pursue grievance management with authorities.

iii) ***Occupational safety and health***

Employers and workers seem aware that their work is highly hazardous. There is a high risk of accidents from trees and machinery, corrosion and poisoning from chemicals and general health problems arising from heavy loads. Key interviewees within the MGLSD's Directorate of Labour acknowledged forestry was a high-risk sector. Risks related to the chemicals used during the initial tree-planting stages, exposure to a number of safety issues during harvesting (such as falling trees and sharp objects), and the effects of dust and noise from chainsaws when processing trees into timber. As such, workplace health and safety was observed more than any other decent work element among the cases studied. Each initiative made some effort to enforce the use of protective gear, especially against chemicals. Only some employers provided gear, while others required workers to supply their own at personal cost. In large part, private forests, such as those operating under the auspices of the Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA), strictly enforce health and safety measures. For these operators, safe working conditions are a basic minimum standard that should not be compromised. In the majority of cases, however, youth worked without protective gear, claiming they were unable to afford even basic equipment such as gumboots, gloves or helmets.

Health problems also result from work in the forestry sector. Common injuries include saw cuts, chest pains and other bodily harm arising from carrying heavy loads, while fevers result from mosquito bites and working at night in the cold. Provisions relating to medical insurance or compensation for work-related injuries vary. Youth working in private forests said they receive first aid medical treatment at the expense of their employer. As noted previously, the UTGA requires its members to pay for medical treatment upfront, but is required to provide health insurance. Most youth working in group forests indicated they are required to take care of their own medical treatment in case of any injuries sustained during forestry work. If their injuries result from sawing wood, the owner of the saw is required to take the injured workers to the health centre and pay for their treatment. Overall, we did not find any evidence of payment of workplace compensation. Indeed, some youth reported that when they receive injuries, they are discontinued from work and replacement workers are employed to finish the job.

iv) ***Remuneration and compensation (income)***

All youth reported being underpaid for the work undertaken. Remuneration is generally tagged to hours worked (which varies per region) and an employee's

negotiating power, as illustrated in the text box below. This suggests that wages can vary among employees doing the same job for the same time period. Loading trucks with firewood or timber is remunerated separately and only when the trucks are safely on the road, away from the watchful eyes of NFA enforcers. This is a form of exploitation: as noted by some respondents, employees do not always receive their pay, especially when the employer engages them in illegal lumbering or if the timber is impounded by NFA rangers. Due to the informality that prevails in the sector, workplace compensation and social security do not apply.

v) ***Working hours***

Typically, youth worked between 8 to 10 hours a day, 7 days a week, sometimes working late into the evenings and at night. This translates to an average of 56 to 70 hours a week, exceeding the maximum 48 working hours per week permitted under the Employment Act (2006), except for shift employees who can work 56 hours per week.

vi) ***Technical and vocational training***

Acquisition of the skills required to effectively engage in forestry enterprises is a pressing need emerging from all the case studies. Typically, civil society organizations such as Tree Talk Plus, Vi Agroforestry, CODECA and Mpigi District Farmers' Association provide some basic training linked to their level of intervention in the value chain. Most training, therefore, pertains to preparation of nursery beds, planting and managing nurseries and transferring seedlings to plantations. In some instances, training in group dynamics and business management is provided. Where initial

Box 6: Remuneration for youth

Mpigi

- UGX 1 000 per hour from 07.00 to 12.00 or UGX 15 000 per day from 07.00 to 18.00 on the forest plantation
- UGX 120 000 for loading a large truck of firewood
- UGX 10 000 for loading a small tipper of firewood

Bitamazire's forest in Masindi

- UGX 500 per seedling for planting
- UGX 5 500 per piece for cutting mahogany (12 x 2 x 14 inch) – this includes labour of UGX 2 000 and UGX 3 500 for saw hire
- UGX 3 000 per piece (12 x 2 x 14 inch) of lower value wood
- UGX 300 to UGX 1 000 for transferring timber to the truck, depending on distance
- UGX 20 000 for loading 7 tonnes of timber on a truck – this is paid by the buyer

Private forests in Kaliro district

- UGX 40 000 per youth per month (working from 06.00 to 17.00 and night patrol, seven days a week)
- UGX 300 000 per hectare per contract, on short contractual basis

groups are supported by the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), all members receive the training. But as this membership base grows, new members do not receive any training. Similarly, youth do not receive any training prior to commencing work on private or government forest plantations. According to the youth in Kaliro, "learning is always on the job through observations [sic]". No form of vocational or technical training on forestry-related issues is provided.

However, the owners and managers of large private forests intimated that all their workers received the training necessary to complete their jobs at all stages of the value chain. For example, a private forest owner in Masindi indicated the NFA provided training on controlling timber waste. The Uganda Timber Growers Association indicated they have minimum training standards in place, which apply to all their workers, including ongoing training and awareness-raising. They also encourage and support members to hire workers trained by the national forestry institutions to undertake highly technical jobs such as harvesting. Another private owner noted that forestry requires substantial technical knowledge on forest management and it takes a long time to train workers on a wide range of issues. In his case, despite undergoing training for nearly two years, his employees had yet to gain the requisite skills.

The role of the central government (Ministry of Water and Environment)

The Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) in the Ministry of Water and Environment plays a supportive role geared towards institutionally strengthening the forestry sector. According to a key FSSD informant, it provides capacity building and generates and enforces guidelines and frameworks for community-based forestry, as well as providing specific support to private forest owners. While this support is available to all demographics, the FSSD has a collaborative working arrangement with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (at a national level) and Community Development Officers (at the local government level) to establish criteria for targeting particular groups such as youth, women and persons with a disability. In this regard, they target institutions, such as schools, where most young people are found.

The FSSD collaborates with FAO on several projects, some of which focus on research and documentation, and with the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) III, which has a strategic focus on particular demographic groups. It has also recently signed an agreement with Youth Go Green, a civil society group with which it will design and implement several projects specifically involving youth.

The role of local governments

According to the district forestry services handbook, The National Forestry Programme (2002) established the District Forestry Services (DFS), with overall responsibility for ensuring local governments, service providers and farmers organize improved local forestry support services. Among its many roles, the DFS has specific responsibilities for promoting decent rural employment and youth in forestry.

These include: developing supportive by-laws; supporting and/or developing Forest Management Plans (FMPs); building capacity for the management of Local Forest Reserves (LFRs); and promoting innovative approaches to forestry. The DFS also has responsibility for delivering forestry advisory services in agroforestry, Collaborative Forest Management (CFM), partnerships and management of private and community forests.

These roles and responsibilities mean that local governments are required to promote (youth) participation in forestry, providing necessary support through by-laws and training/capacity building. According to the Kaliro District Forest Officer, its mandate is to ensure that forest resources are utilized sustainably, using inspections to ensure compliance. He revealed that in addition to the provision of free seedlings, the local government "only provides guidance to the willing youth". Also, due to logistical challenges, the local government only provides technical support and awareness meetings (not training) on request. As such, many youth groups engaged in forestry do not receive much-needed technical support. This was corroborated by the youth of Mikwano Environment Uganda, who said:

> "We require more trainings/workshops regarding tree raising and forest management. For now, we learn on job and have never attended any sensitization meetings. It is only our manager who attends a few district meetings from which he teaches shares *[sic]* learning with us. We also lack a link to relevant organizations that would offer assistance to *[sic]* in terms of forest activities".

Similarly, respondents from Izinga Youth Farmers Group believe that, although they are registered as a CBO, the district is unaware of them. They have never received any extension services from the district forest office, and claim they cannot easily access any district support.

vii) ***The four core labour standards (association, child labour, forced labour, non-discrimination)***

According to youth respondents, there are no trade unions focusing on the forestry sector. At the same time, most respondents did not raise the question of grievance management as an issue. A few mentioned trade unions would support them to negotiate better pay and curb child labour where it occurred. The UTGA, however, said it has participatory grievance management processes in place and encourages its workers to join trade unions if they wish.

Regarding child labour, there was a fine line between "child work" and "child labour" in the case studies. The study noted the involvement of school-aged children (14 to 17 years) engaged in commercial activities by and under the supervision of their parents during the school holidays. This aimed to generate money for school fees within a short time. According to parents working for a private grower in Kamengo (Box 4), "when we work as a family, we complete tasks faster and so do more tasks and earn more during the school holidays."

Where children worked with their parents or guardians, the volume (heaviness) of the work assigned to them was regulated. However, there were incidents in which

children who had never attended or dropped out of school were observed in pit sawing processes in Kagora Central Forest Reserve in Mwenge Plantations. The employers of these children insisted that:

> "These children are out of school and would rather be engaged in a gainful activity than be left to loiter the villages. They have mostly been sent to us by their parents or elder siblings and their pay and other conditions of work have been negotiated with the respective family members. We make an initial payment to their families before the children can come to work. Here in the forest, we assign them light tasks under the supervision of older boys. The rest of the payment will be made after completion of the tasks assigned to them, or if they wish to return home before the job is done, we only pay according to their work's worth. It is the same arrangement we use to pay the adults".

Overall, employers and workers were highly conscious of sensitivities surrounding and prohibitions against child labour, and avoided engaging children much as possible. But, as observed in the foregoing discussion, external social and economic factors can dictate children's involvement in commercial activities.

The findings of this study echo an earlier report on working conditions and productivity of logging companies in western Uganda (Balimunsi *et al.*, 2011), which reported poor working and living conditions, high workloads and anxiety regarding job security, especially in private companies. Lack of decent employment was indicated as the primary cause of workers' complaints and job dissatisfaction. It is therefore evident that decent rural employment is an undeveloped policy area requiring attention. Ensuring decent work will address challenges related to knowledge and skills, remuneration, rights and overall worker wellbeing. It is a necessary precursor to encouraging youth participation in the forest sector.

5. Decent work indicators for promoting employment opportunities in the forestry sector

This section proposes decent work indicators for promoting employment opportunities and improving work conditions for youth in rural forestry. In proposing these indicators, we are cognizant of the role and achievements of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in documenting labour market conditions through the labour force module of the National Household Surveys (and others). These surveys provide indicators on population characteristics and labour force participation rates, including levels and trends over time at national, regional and rural-urban levels.[14] The proposed indicators seek to enrich this analysis by emphasizing the need to generate data on labour participation in the forestry sector. The proposed indicators will thus enhance monitoring of decent work in forestry.

5.1 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSING THE DECENT WORK INDICATORS

The importance of the forestry sector to Uganda's rural and national economies continues to grow. As a result, an increasing number of people – especially youth – are employed in the sector. Although the exact number is not known, a recent report observed that:

> In terms of employment, the Forest Policy (2001) estimated that forestry employs one million people in the formal and informal sectors. This value has since changed given interventions under the Farm Income Enhancement and Forest Conservation Project (FIEFOC), the Sawlog Production Grant Scheme (SPGS) and the Community Tree Planting Programme that have supported tree planting by the private sector and communities between 2005 and now (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2011).

Employment opportunities in the forest sector and the promotion of green jobs in Uganda highlight the need to consider decent work as an essential element of the country's forestry sector employment. The proposed indicators therefore aim to improve the quality of existing jobs and promote the creation of new ones, thereby contributing to improved employment outcomes in rural forestry. The indicators focus on basic information and are sensitive to context to ensure their relevance. They also aim to contribute to achievement of SDG Goal 8, which aims to "promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all." Specific targets on decent work are:

[14] Reports can be found at www.ubos.org/labour/.

8.3 – promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities [and] decent job creation… including access to financial services.
8.5 – achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with a disability, and equal pay for work of equal value.
8.6 – reduction of the proportion of youth not in employment, education and training.
8.7 – eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking; prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour in all its forms.
8.8 – protection of labour rights and promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers…women and those in precarious employment.

5.2 THE PROPOSED INDICATORS

The decent work indicators proposed below are adopted (with modification) from the ILO framework, which covers ten substantive elements corresponding to the four strategic pillars of the Decent Work Agenda (i.e. full and productive employment; rights at work; social protection; and the promotion of social dialogue). The indicators proposed here are those believed to meaningfully capture all of the above-listed dimensions of SDG Goal 8. At the same time, they are realistic and relevant to rural employment in the forestry sector in Uganda, speaking directly to the decent work issues emerging from this study.

Adopted with modification from ILO (2008)

It is important to note some of the proposed indicators are already being applied more generally and their inclusion here is to emphasize the importance of capturing this information specifically for the forestry and rural agricultural sectors. Measuring the proposed indicators will therefore draw on and complement existing statistics. The measurements should capture data on vulnerable workers and cross-cutting issues such as gender and be sensitive to social and economic contexts. To further enrich the contribution to decent work in forestry, information generated from measuring these indicators will not simply consider employment but examine qualitative aspects of work, such as workers' rights, social protection and social dialogue.

Table 4: Proposed decent work indicators for the forestry sector

Element of the decent work agenda	Statistical Indicators	Legal Framework Indicators
Employment opportunities	• Rate of informal employment • Labour force participation rate • Employment by status in employment • Proportion of self-employed and contributing family workers • Incidence of migrant and seasonal/ casual employment • Share of wage employment • Labour under-utilization • Time-related underemployment rate	Youth Policy Employment Act (2006) BTVET Act (2008)
Adequate earnings and productive work	• Working poverty rate • Average hourly/daily/monthly earnings • Average real wages • Statutory minimum wage • Employees with recent job training	Minimum wage commitments BTVET Act (2008)
Decent working time	• Excessive working time • Usual hours worked • Annual hours worked • Time-related underemployment rate • Paid annual leave	Employment Act (2006) – hours of work
Combining work, family and personal life	• Unusual hours • Maternity protection • Earnings for contributing family work	Employment Act (2006)
Work that should be abolished	• Child labour of all forms • Hazardous work • Forced labour	Children's Act (1997) Employment Act (2006) Occupational Safety and Health Act (2006)
Stability and security of work	• Employment contracts • Precarious employment rate • Job tenure • Subsistence worker rate • Real earnings casual workers	Employment Act (2006) Contracts Act (2010)
Equal opportunity and treatment in employment	• Occupational segregation by sex • Share of women in management • Gender wage gap • Share of women in wage employment • Non-discrimination at work • Persons with disabilities in employment	Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007) Employment Act (2006) Disability Act (2006)
Safe work environment	• Occupational injury rate, fatal • Occupational injury rate, non-fatal • Time lost due to occupational injuries • Labour inspection	Occupational Safety and Health Act (2006) Disaster Risk Management Policy Workers Compensation Act (2000)

Element of the decent work agenda	Statistical Indicators	Legal Framework Indicators
Social security	• Health care expenditure not financed out of pocket by workers • Share of workers contributing to a pension scheme • Sick leave • Incapacity and invalidity benefits	Employment Act (2006) Workplace policies National Social Security Fund Act (1985) National Social Protection Policy Workers Compensation Act (2000)
Social dialogue, workers' and employers' representation	• Union density rate • Enterprises subscribed to employer organization • Collective bargaining coverage rate • Days not worked due to strikes	ILO Conventions C.87 and C98 Labour Unions Act (2006)

Adopted with modification from ILO (2008)

6. Lessons, challenges and recommendations for youth participation in forestry

Decent rural employment is relevant to all employment sectors, including forestry. Youth in the sector have successes and learn lessons as well as experiencing challenges and decent work shortfalls. But what are the causal factors for these decent work gaps and what can be done to address them? The focus of this section is to outline key successes and lessons, discuss policy and implementation challenges, and propose suggestions to improve policy and practice.

6.1 KEY SUCCESSES AND LESSONS (WHAT IS WORKING WELL)

Collaborative forestry: The case studies highlighted the lack of land and financial resources as an impediment to youth engagement in commercial forestry. At the same time, when youth come together in groups, they are able to leverage resources and attract support from government and civil society projects to commence and develop forest enterprises. Examples of this included youth groups who were able to obtain land from the NFA.

Training and information: Providing training and regular information on forest management is important to the success of initiatives, contributing to human resource development and improving management practices in both individual and group forests. It is also a way of encouraging more youth to participate in the sector.

6.2 CHALLENGES

6.2.1. Policy level challenges

Lack of knowledge: There is a general lack of awareness among both employers and workers about decent employment. Many employers who are aware do not treat decent employment as a priority, especially because most decent work elements have cost implications. This, coupled with high levels of unemployment and the heightened need for workers to keep their existing jobs, has allowed employers to neglect decent work entitlements. At the same time, workers have not pursued this issue. Together, these factors have undermined efforts to enforce the law.

Inadequate technical capacity: The field of occupational health and safety (which includes labour inspection and the enforcement of the decent work agenda) is highly technical. Yet Uganda lacks personnel with critical training, experience and requisite skills. There is limited, if any, OSH training provided in Uganda, resulting in a lack of skilled staff at the responsible ministry. Overall, there is a shortage of trained personnel capable of enforcing decent workplace employment in forestry and other sectors.

Limited financial and logistical resources: The consistently limited resources allocated to the Labour Directorate make its work even more challenging. The budget framework paper for financial year 2017/18, for example, shows limited funding set aside for key social development outcomes. Promotion of labour productivity and employment is allocated a paltry UGX 6.438 billion (3.7 percent) of the sector's budget (CSBAG, 2017). With this limited funding, the Directorate is unable to marshal its (limited) available manpower to inspect and follow up on labour issues and enforce decent employment in the country.

Similarly, key NFA informants indicated that the institution is constrained by the limited funding it receives from the central government for activities such as enforcement and the Community Tree Planting Programme. Through the latter, communities are supposed to receive free seedlings, but this is unfeasible given the NFA's meager resources.

NFA budgets for UGX 2 billion per year. Informants reported that funds had been severely cut in 2016/2017 to 20% of the actual budget, impacting activities such as seedling and monitoring. Accessibility to rural areas where most smallholder forest farmers operate is difficult. Moreover, forest officers are affected by limited or no facilitation to undertake these activities.

6.2.2. Implementation level challenges

District local governments and civil society organizations continue to encourage youth participation in forestry, albeit with some challenges.

Lack of investment resources: Generally speaking, the youth do not own resources such as land and funds to meaningfully engage in agroforestry or other forestry activities. The importance of this challenge was highlighted in a recent study, which asserted that that less than 50 percent of Ugandans have access to land (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2015). For young people, the situation is dire. Depending on their age, youth may have access to their parents' or families' land in order to farm independently, but do not have direct ownership, as illustrated in a report on opportunities for young people in agriculture (Lowe and Sanyu, 2017). The report noted that youth aged 14 to 17 depend on their families for small portions of land, agricultural supplies, basic resources and tools and cannot dictate what type of crops are grown. Moreover, any benefits derived from such agricultural ventures must be shared with the household. Older youth, aged 18 and above, are granted bigger proportions and more control over their parents' land, and have more freedom to decide whether to grow cash or food crops. They also have greater autonomy over how income from farming is spent. However, they still lack formal

ownership, which they would obtain through inheritance or purchase. In both youth age categories, women are at a greater disadvantage than men: private tree planting initiatives qualifying for government support require significant land, yet women own only 7 percent of land in Uganda (Mukasa *et al.*, 2012). The report highlights the disadvantages young women face: they rarely obtain ownership rights and have only limited rights of access because they must depend on either their parents or spouses. This suggests that while older boys may decide to invest in forestry, their female counterparts must still obtain permission to do so from their parents or spouses.

Long gestation period of trees: Youth are demotivated and hesitant to engage in economically gainful agroforestry enterprises, citing the long wait periods before investment benefits are realized. They prefer "quick reward" investments and often agitate for hand-outs from supporting CSOs.

Poor decent work standards: Youth who have attempted to find employment in private forest initiatives are discouraged by the lack of decent work standards, especially factors such as low or no payment, job insecurity, heavy workloads with inadequate pay, and poor workplace health and safety.

Unsustainability of projects: Civil society organizations lack sufficient resources to support many youth groups in a sustainable way. This is complicated by a lack of training and awareness among youth on the benefits of engaging in agroforestry.

Lack of social protection: Forestry is prone to natural and manmade disasters such as climate change effects and fires, yet there is no insurance available for the sector. No compensation is provided by the government if entrepreneurs lose their investment.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Several opportunities exist for youth to participate in rural forestry under decent rural employment conditions. As already noted, Uganda's policy framework promotes DRE, albeit with some gaps. Moreover, youth have an opportunity to hold their employers accountable based on these policy and legal prescriptions. Nevertheless, as seen from the case studies, a favourable policy framework is not sufficient to ensure compliance with DRE. Concerted efforts are needed to fill policy gaps and improve implementation. The following suggestions outline some ways in which this can be achieved.

6.3.1. Policy recommendations

1. **Compliance with DRE regulations**. To promote adherence to FSC standards, in 2015 the government drafted a Forest Stewardship Standard (2015). The document is still in draft form and is highly recommended to be finalized and promoted. It is also important to monitor adherence to the standard, especially Principle 2

relating to workers' rights and employment conditions. This can be done through regular FSC/FSSD audits. Effort needs to be made to link standards to the tenets of decent employment and enhance their application in rural forestry.

2. **Training**. The government should address the lack of occupational safety and health (OSH) training and its application to various sectors, including forestry. This, together with improved resourcing, can go a long way towards improving OSH in the forest sector through labour inspections, preventive measures and policies. Similarly, the Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) programme could consider providing training and skills development in sustainable forest management targeting rural youth. Additionally, it is important to widely promote academic training in forestry and encourage girls and women to pursue careers in forestry-related disciplines.

3. **Establish a minimum wage**. Uganda's minimum wage was most recently fixed in 1984 at UGX 6 000 for selected sectors. These included the City Council and all municipalities and towns under the Local Governments Act, agricultural estates employing at least ten people at any one time, mining establishments, milling industries and sugar plantations and factories (Wambuga, 2016). Legally, this remains the established minimum wage. Efforts to reintroduce the policy debate on the minimum wage have been met with resistance from the highest political office, arguing it will discourage investors from coming to the country, yet they provide much-needed employment opportunities to young people. It is therefore important to revive the debate and policy engagement for the establishment of meaningful minimum wages for various sectors.

4. **Strengthen the Green Jobs programme**. The role of forestry in poverty eradication and achieving the SDGs should be highlighted as a way of promoting employment in the forestry sector. The Green Jobs Programme provides a great vehicle for this by promoting investment in forest-based jobs. In addition, government should encourage youth to invest grant money received from the Youth Livelihood Fund into forestry activities. In order to achieve this, barriers to YLF support for long-term investment have to be removed. Specifically, the fund guidelines need to be revised to extend the payback period for youth who invest in long-term ventures such as forestry.

5. **Promote and incentivize agroforestry.** A recurrent message in all the case studies was a lack of or limited access to resources (land, finances, seedlings, fertilizers, etc.) underpinned by the long growth period of trees. These factors prevent youth from engaging in forestry. To address this, government needs to initiate policies and programmes that promote and incentivize market-oriented agroforestry, specifically targeted at youth. Key incentives required include affordable land,

which could be made available through the NFA, investment grants similar to those provided by the SPGS but with more accommodating terms, and training and skills development. These should be geared towards developing small-to medium-sized agroforestry enterprises. In this way, youth will benefit from short- to medium-term (crops and livestock) and long-term (trees) enterprises. Collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) will be important to ensure the feasibility and benefits of such incentives.

6. **Promote social protection for forest sector workers**. Social protection coverage for workers in the forestry sector is a necessary precursor to achieving decent work in the sector. Because working arrangements are often informal and short-term, appropriate social protection schemes will vary from enterprise to enterprise. Options that can work for them must be voluntary or semi-compulsory contributory schemes, with benefits that may include health insurance, disability and/or injury compensation, paid maternity leave and workman's compensation, among others. Extending social protection to forest sector (and other informal sector) workers may be achieved through specific legislation (such as a minimum wage legislation), reforms or amendments to the NSSF (National Social Security Fund) Act, and liberalizing retirement benefit provisions to include regulated, non-state players in order to reach the vast informal sector.

6.3.2. Implementation level recommendations

1. **Set fair uniform wages.** While labour and employment stakeholders are engaging the government on establishing a minimum wage,[15] key players in the forestry sector and trade unions need to negotiate and agree upon fair payment rates for all forestry workers across the country. This will catalyze more secure employment and minimize the high labour turnover that characterizes the sector.

2. **Support access to assets and resources.** Because many youth cannot afford the NFA's land lease conditions, civil society organizations should consider supporting youth willing to work together on a forest sector venture to acquire leasehold land from large-scale landlords in their communities. At the same time, civil society needs to strengthen youth awareness of the various legal and socio-political avenues through which they can acquire land. This would have the added value of increasing opportunities for young women to access land, where they would otherwise have difficulty acquiring land ownership from their parents and/or spouses.

   Another way to increase access to resources would be to encourage youth to form Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) in order to obtain micro-credit for forestry ventures. Being part of a group/SACCO increases an enterprise's chances of success (as there will always be members available to work

when others are absent) and should be coupled with training in financial and business management to enable youth to pay back their business loans.

3. **Promote association:** Smallholder forest owners should be encouraged to join national associations such as UTGA. This will increase their voice and chances of achieving social dialogue and stakeholder cooperation. It will also facilitate compliance with DRE standards, technical support, collective bargaining and good practice in employer–worker relations.

4. **Skills development.** Skills development should be enhanced to build a technical and sustainable forestry workforce at every stage of the value chain. As a matter of workplace policy, workers should be provided with skills training in the aspects of work for which they are hired. Small youth groups engaged in forestry activities need a capacity development policy in place and should seek support from relevant stakeholders including skills training workshops, awareness sessions run by local media, access to publications, etc. As a starting point, youth groups and private forest employers need access to information manuals from organizations such as FAO, ILO and NFA and also need to self-sensitize/train. Over time, they can build on this base through additional training opportunities.

5. **Health and safety in the workplace.** As a first step to ensuring health and safety in the forestry sector, employers and workers need to educate themselves about Uganda's OSH policy and legislation and the provisions of ILO Convention No. 184 (Health and Safety in Agriculture) (2001) and recommendation No. 192. Employers should proactively encourage enforcement of these provisions by establishing an OSH workplace management system. To promote workplace health and safety and compliance with labour standards, the role of labour inspections should to be reoriented away from an enforcement approach towards one that educates employers and workers on labour standards and the benefits of compliance. In this way, labour inspectors would play a facilitative role to help workers improve their health and safety. They can provide customized OSH training through informal, community-based programmes including workers and employers from various forest sector enterprises.

6. **Multi sector collaboration to strengthen compliance with occupational safety and health standards.** The Forest Sector Support Department (FSSD) in the MWE is mandated to inspect, monitor and report on labour conditions in forestry. The NFA may, but is not necessarily tasked to, enforce decent employment practices among

[15] This is an ongoing process and the government has recently received a report from the Minimum Wages Advisory Board recommending a minimum wage (see http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Government-sets-Shs130000-minimum-wage/688334-3952236-dtv5xs/index.html). Civil society actors also support a minimum wage (see for example http://www.fes-uganda.org/media/documents/Final_Policy_Brief_Minimum_Wage_An_urgent_call.pdf). A private members' bill drafted in 2015 on the same issues is before parliament.

people possessing licenses to carry out their enterprises in government forests. However, the MGLSD's Directorate of Labour, Employment, and Occupational Safety is mandated to ensure safe, healthy and decent employment across all sectors, thereby providing an enabling environment for increased employment opportunities and productivity. Collaboration between the MWE and MGLSD, including sharing strategies, skills and resources and devising effective ways of enforcing decent work practices in the forestry sector, is therefore important.

Similarly, in order to close existing industrial relations gaps, including negotiations, collective bargaining, labour administration and others, the labour inspectorate could consider partnering with non-state actors to fill staff and logistical gaps in labour enforcement. These non-state actors can reach the numerous small and medium-sized forestry sector enterprises that largely operate informally and assist government to monitor work conditions. Specifically, non-state actors can play crucial roles in: labour inspection; technical and legal advice to workers; mediating consultations and negotiations between labourers and their employers; raising awareness about labour standards and decent work; and lobbying informal sector employers to adhere to the decent work agenda and provide protections and necessary compensations to their workers.

7. **Youth in policy engagement:** Rural youth could benefit greatly from being encouraged and supported to participate in collective action, not only to acquire assets and resources but also to actively participate in policy processes. Young women especially should be assisted to overcome gender biases that prevent or otherwise undermine their participation in decision-making. Organizations that represent youth interests, such as the Uganda Youth Network and the Uganda Youth Farmers' Association, need to prioritize forest sector participation and decent work for youth in the sector on their lobbying agenda.

Forestry makes important contributions to the national economy. It boosts local incomes for individuals and businesses and is an important source of local government revenue. It is especially important for youth residing in remote, rural and forest-dependent communities who do not have many alternative forms of income generation. In their attempt to engage in economic forestry sector enterprises across the various value chain, decent work emerges as critical, especially in downstream value chain. In order to boost youth participation in this highly informal sector, it is important to find a balance between flexibility (freelancing, casual labouring, short-term contracts, etc.) and ensuring decent work for employees. This can be best achieved if the tenets of decent rural employment are established and adhered to in forest sector workplaces.

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Annex 1: List of respondents

No	Name	Organization
1		Business woman/employer – Kagoro CFR -– Pit sawing
2	Asiku Micah	Community Development and Conservation Agency
3	Bitamazire Keith	Private Forest Owner
4	Denis Mutaryebwa	FAOUG – Sawlog Production Grant Scheme
5	District Forest Officer	DFO – Kaliro District
6	Fred Mujurizi	Vi Agroforestry
7	Godfrey Lutwama	Forest Sector Working Group/Environmental Alert
8	Hannington Sekajja	New Forest Company - Pole Treatment Plant Supervisor
9	Jonathan K. Mayanja	Tree Talk Plus
10	Joseph Muhairwa	Izinga Natural Resources – Chairperson
11	Lwanga Mwangala	Uganda Timber Growers' Association
12	Margaret Adata	Ministry of Water and Environment - Commissioner Forestry
13	Martin Wandera	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development - Director, Labour Employment & OSH
14	Nsubuga	Hear Uganda
15	Paul Musamali	National Forestry Authority – Director Corporate Affairs
16	Peter Walira	Mwenge plantations - Plantation Manager
17	Rogers Mugoda	Mikwano Uganda, Kaliro – Project Director
18	Stella Nabbumba	Mpigi District Farmers' Association – Coordinator

List of group discussions

1. 10 staff (Six male and four female, all adults) of New Forest Company – Pole Treatment Plant, Mityana
2. 30 youth (29 male, one female) outside the New Forest Company – Pole Treatment Plant, Mityana
3. Nine youth (male) Izinga Youth Farmers' Group – Izinga Village, Kaliro
4. Four youth (male) – Mikwano Environment Uganda – Valley Hill LC1, Kaliro
5. 13 youth (male) – Private forest, Mayobyo village, Luwala parish, Kammengo sub-county
6. 28 youth (25male, three female) – Nkinga Twekembe Environmental Group – Ndawandigi Forest, Butambala

7. 13 youth (Eight male, five female) – Budongo Forest Reserve – Karongo Village
8. 13 youth (Eight male, five female) – Mpigi District Farmers' Association Secretariat
9. 21 youth (10 male, 11 female) – Mbazzi Farmers' Association – Muduuma sub-county
10. Three youth (male) – Bitamazire's sons – Private forest, Masindi
11. Three youth (male) – Kikumiro Central Forest Reserve – Pit sawing
12. 35 people (27 youth and 8 adults, all male) – Kagora Central Forest Reserve – Pit sawing
13. Five youth (female) – Kagora Central Forest Reserve – Nursery

Notes

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